GREAT SHORT NOVELS OF THE WORLD

☆ B O N I B O O K S ☆

GREAT SHORT NOVELS OF THE WORLD

A Collection of Complete Tales Chosen from the Literatures of All Periods and Countries

BY

BARRETT H. CLARK

VOLUME TWO

☆ ALBERT & CHARLES BONI ☆

Contents

VOLUME II

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Spain

INTRODUCTION

THE literature of Spain is rich in stories and tales and every sort of prose and verse romance. The ballads and epics that were brought together or actually written in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries — especially those concerned with the national hero known as the Cid — constitute the earliest mass of fiction in the Spanish language, though the original composition of certain elements of the Cid story goes back probably to the Twelfth Century. In the following century Alfonso the Wise and certain other writers introduced short tales and legends, borrowed largely from foreign sources, into their writings on historical subjects. Fables and *Fabliaux* were likewise translated or adapted by contemporary and later authors.

The best-known collection of short stories is the *Conde Lucanor* by Juan Manuel (1282–1347). One of the earliest Spanish novels was Juan Rodriguez' *El Siervo libre de Amor*, which dates from the early Fifteenth Century. It was during the same century that the celebrated romance of chivalry, *Amadis de Gaula*, made its appearance. Little is known of its origin, but its influence was immense. Until the day when *Don Quixote* sealed the fate of this sort of story, Spanish authors were busily engaged in turning out quantitites of romantic and chivalric romances. A few of these may still be read with pleasure, especially novels of adventure like Mendoza's *Lazarillo de Tormes*, Aleman's *Guzman de Alfarache*, and Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and *Exemplary Novels*. Cervantes and the best of his contemporaries were imitated by a number of Seventeenth Century writers, who added, however, little that was original. Quevedo and Montalván are among the best of the fiction writers of this period.

It was not until the Nineteenth Century that the art of fiction was again taken up by writers who had anything very much worth while to say. Juan Valera, Alarcón, Bécquer, Caballéro and Pardo-Bazán, are the outstanding figures in prose fiction of the last century who wrote short stories and short novels.

The Spaniards of the past generation have excelled in the shorter forms. Aside from the contemporary Eduardo Zamacois, one of whose stories appears in these pages, may be mentioned "Azorin" and Vicente Blasco-Ibanez.

JUAN PEREZ DE MONTALVÁN

(1602–1638)

Doctor Juan Perez de Montalván (or Montalbán) became a priest at the age of twenty-three. He is best known as a dramatist, one of the cleverest and ablest imitators of Lope de Vega, whose friend and associate he was. He died insane at the age of thirty-six.

In 1624 he published a volumes of *Novelas*, from which the following tale is taken.

The translation was made by Thomas Roscoe, and is reprinted from Roscoe's *Spanish Novelists*, London, no date.

THE TEST OF FRIENDSHIP

A YOUNG gentleman of Toledo, of the name of Felesardo, having involved himself in an adventure which threatened serious consequences, was compelled to leave the place of his birth with as much expedition as possible. He was proceeding on his journey, accompanied only by his servant, and had arrived within a few leagues of the city of Valencia, when, on entering a wood, he suddenly encountered a lady, who was in the act of descending in the utmost haste from her carriage. In her agitation she had neglected to veil herself, and discovered a countenance so lovely, and at the same time so full of affliction, that the cavalier resolved at once to offer her all the protection and assistance which she might require, and place at her disposal his well-tried courage and his sword. This generous determination was gratefully acknowledged by the lady, who did not reject the seasonable interposition of the stranger. "Heaven itself," she exclaimed, "seems to have sent you hither to save me from the misery that hangs over me. Let me beseech you to follow me. Hasten with me to separate two combatants, who have arranged to meet in this wood, and who have entered it, as I myself saw, but a few minutes since. They are already engaged." As she uttered these words she rushed into the wood, and the Toledan, leaving his horse in his servant's hands, hastily followed her footsteps.

They had advanced but a few paces, when they heard the clashing of swords, at the sound of which they redoubled their speed, and soon arrived at the spot where two men were fighting with the utmost fury. The Toledan, running forward, exerted himself to separate them, in

which, partly by entreaty, and partly by force, he at length succeeded. When tranquillity was in some measure restored, he enquired into the origin of their quarrel. "Don Fabrique de Mendoza," answered one of the combatants, "has the honour of replying to your question, and the name of my enemy is Don Alvaro Ponce.

"The cause of our dispute has accompanied you hither. The lady who stands here — this cruel Donna Rosaura — is the object of our love; but all our devotion has not produced any return of affection, nor could the most assiduous attentions on our part soften the austerity of her manner. Notwithstanding this cold indifference, I had intended to persist peacefully in my solicitations, but my rival has adopted another course; he has compelled me to meet him here." "Which," interrupted Don Alvaro, "is the only step I could take. If I had no competitor in Donna Rosaura's affections, she might be induced to listen to me; my object, therefore, is, by his death, if by no other means, to remove the obstacle to my happiness." In reply to this statement, the Toledan did not hesitate to express his disapprobation of their conduct. He represented it as injurious to the character of the lady, whose reputation ought to be dearer to them than their own happiness or lives, but which might be implicated, when it was known throughout the kingdom of Valencia that they had fought on her account. "Besides," continued he, "what results can the conqueror expect from his victory? Can he imagine that after he has made her name the topic of public scandal, she will regard him with a more favourable eye? Impossible! Listen to me. I would entreat you jointly to make an effort more worthy of the noble names you bear. Restrain your furious passions, and consent to bind yourselves by an oath to abide by the arrangement which suggests itself to me. I see a mode by which your differences may be adjusted, without the shedding of blood. It is this, — let the lady declare that her choice has fallen on one of the two, and let the unsuccessful lover, renouncing all hostile measures, take his departure in peace." "With all my heart," exclaimed Don Alvaro, "I swear by everything that is sacred that I will conform to your proposal. Only let Donna Rosaura take her resolution; if it is to be so, let her prefer my rival to myself. Even this misfortune would be more tolerable than my present state of uncertainty." "And I call Heaven to witness," said Don Fabrique, "that if the dear object of all my adoration does not pronounce in my favour, I will banish myself at once from her presence, and though I may not be able to forget her charms, at least I will never see them more."

"Now, Madam," said the Toledan, turning to Donna Rosaura, "the rest depends upon you; with a single word you can disarm these enraged rivals. You have only to name the happy man who is to reap the reward of his constancy." The lady hesitated — "I should prefer," she said at last, "some other mode of accommodation. Why am I to be made the

price of their reconciliation? I do not refuse my esteem to either of these gentlemen, nor for either of them do I feel any livelier sentiment. Is it reasonable that I should be called upon to encourage hopes which my heart does not sanction, in order to protect myself from the injurious surmises to which their quarrels may give rise?"

"Madam," replied the Toledan, "this is no longer a time for evasion; you must, if I may be allowed to say so, speak your sentiments explicitly. These gentlemen appear to have equal merit, but I feel assured that one of them has a preponderating influence over your heart; of that fact I am sufficiently apprised, by the overwhelming terror which possessed you on our first meeting." "On that terror," replied the lady, "you put a wrong construction. I do not deny that the loss of either of these gentlemen would affect me deeply, and that, innocent as I might be of his fate, I should yet reproach myself with being the cause of it; but I must say, that if I exhibited any symptoms of terror, it was from a consideration of my own situation, and a regard for my own honour, that they sprung."

The disposition of Don Alvaro Ponce was naturally impetuous, and his patience at these words was exhausted. "This is too much," he exclaimed passionately; "since the lady declines the proposal, and we cannot settle the matter peaceably, let the chance of arms decide it." As he spoke, he assumed an offensive attitude, and prepared to attack his enemy, who, on his part, put himself into a position of defence.

At this demonstration all the lady's terrors revived; and influenced more perhaps by these than by any secret partiality, she exclaimed in the utmost distress: "Hold your hands, gentlemen! your demand shall be complied with; since no other method can be found to prevent a conflict which so immediately affects my reputation, I declare that Don Fabrique de Mendoza is the object of my preference." No sooner had she pronounced these words, than the disappointed suitor, darting a furious glance at his mistress and his happy rival, ran to his horse, which he had tied to a tree, and disappeared without uttering a syllable. On the other hand, the joy of the fortunate Mendoza was at its height. He cast himself at the feet of Donna Rosaura; he embraced the Toledan again and again; and could not find expressions sufficiently strong to convey the full force of his gratitude and joy.

When the lady, however, had somewhat recovered her serenity, and perceived that Don Alvaro had departed, she began to reflect with some concern that she had consented to admit the addresses of a lover, whose good qualities she certainly esteemed, but to whom her heart was yet indifferent. She addressed herself to Don Fabrique, and appealed to his sense of honour, not to make an ungenerous use of the preference she had declared in his favour, which only proceeded from the absolute necessity of making a choice between him and Don Alvaro. "Not," said she, "that I have not always distinguished your superior claims to my

regard; I know very well that you possess many good qualities to which he cannot pretend. I will do you the justice to say, that I believe all Valencia cannot produce a more accomplished gentleman than yourself. I will even go further, and will admit, that the attentions of a man like you might gratify the vanity of any woman; but whatever reason I might have to enjoy such a triumph, I must candidly confess that it has so few charms for me, that I regret exceedingly to see the marks of attachment you show to me. It is possible that this insensibility may have its source in the grief I yet feel for the loss I sustained a year ago, when my husband, Don Andrea de Cifuentes, died. Our union was but of short duration, and he was already advanced in age, when my parents, influenced by his great wealth, compelled me to marry him; but, notwithstanding these circumstances, I was much afflicted by his death, and mourn for him every day. And was he not worthy of regret?" continued she; "he in no respect resembled those ill-natured and jealous husbands, who make their age a plea for watching, either in person or by their deputies, every step of a wife who happens to be younger than themselves. The confidence which he reposed in my virtue could not have been exceeded by a husband whose youth and passion might have been a guarantee for my fidelity. There were no bounds to his indulgence, and his only study appeared to be to anticipate all my wishes. Such was Don Andrea de Cifuentes; and you will readily conceive, Don Fabrique, that it is not easy to forget a man endowed with such a disposition. His image is ever present to my mind; and it cannot be doubted, that this circumstance contributes in no small degree to draw my attention from the efforts which others may make to attract my regard."

Unable to control his feelings, Don Fabrique here interrupted the beautiful widow — "With what delight," he exclaimed, "do I hear from your own mouth, the admission that the indifference you have shown to my advances does not arise from any personal dislike. My persevering constancy will, I trust, at last prove me to be worthy of your love." "I shall throw no impediments in the way," replied the lady; "you have my permission to visit me; nor do I restrict you from speaking to me of your love, and endeavouring to establish an interest in my heart. Should any success attend your efforts, I will not disguise my sentiments; but if, notwithstanding the opportunity this afforded, you should happen to fail in your object, I must entreat you to recollect, that it will not be of any conduct of mine that you will have a right to complain."

At these words, without permitting Don Fabrique to utter the reply which was upon his lips, the lady took the hand of the Toledan, and returned abruptly by the way she came. The disconcerted lover followed her, leading his horse by the bridle, until arriving at the spot where her equipage awaited her, she re-seated herself with as much agitation as she had shown on her arrival; though from a very different cause. The two

cavaliers accompanied the carriage to the gates of Valencia, where the parties separated. The widow took the road to her own mansion, and Don Fabrique entertained the Toledan as his guest. When their spirits were sufficiently recruited with repose, and an excellent repast, their conversation turned on the object of the stranger in visiting Valencia, and the stay that he proposed to make in that city. "I shall leave it," observed the Toledan, "as soon as I possibly can. I am merely passing through it, on my way to the nearest seaport, where I propose to take my passage in the first vessel which may be leaving the coast of Spain. I care little in what part of the world I terminate my unfortunate career, provided it be far enough from this ill-fated land." "You surprise me," returned Don Fabrique; "what calamity can have excited feelings like these, and caused you to abhor the great object of our natural affection — our native land?" "After what I have undergone," replied the Toledan, "my country is hateful to my sight, and my only desire is to quit it for ever." The sympathy of Don Fabrique was roused by this avowal, and he expressed much impatience to be made acquainted with the cause of his companion's grief. "If I cannot soothe your pangs," said he, "I can, at least, share them with you. At our first interview, your countenance prepossessed me in your favour. Your manners have added to the charm, and I cannot refrain from taking a lively interest in every thing that concerns you."

"The sentiments you express," returned the Toledan, "form the only consolation I can now receive. As some acknowledgment of the kindness you have shown me, I will, on my part, confess, that when I first saw you in company with Don Alvaro Ponce, I felt a partial inclination for you, which I do not recollect to have before experienced on my first meeting with any one, and which made me very uneasy, lest Donna Rosaura should prefer your rival to yourself. My joy, therefore, was great when she determined in your favour. This first impression has been since so fully confirmed, that, so far from designing to conceal my sorrows from you, I promise myself some degree of pleasure in laying before you all my feelings. My unhappy story will be soon told.

"My name is Don Juan de Zarata; my family resides in Toledo, where I first saw the light. In my infancy, I had the misfortune to lose both my parents, from whom I inherited a considerable property. When I had arrived at an age which entitled me to the absolute control of my estates, finding myself free from engagements, and sufficiently wealthy to consult only my own wishes in the disposal of my hand, I married a young lady of great beauty, in whose small fortune and inferior condition I saw no obstacles to our union. Intoxicated with my happiness, and anxious to secure the complete possession of the object of my love, I conducted her, a few days after our marriage, to one of my estates at a little distance from Toledo. Here we resided for some time in the enjoyment of perfect

happiness, until the Duke de Naxera, who possesses a mansion in the neighbourhood of my property, called one day to refresh himself after the fatigues of the chase. The sight of my wife inspired him with a licentious passion. This, at least, was my impression; and I was more fully persuaded of the fact, when he began to court my society with an eagerness which he had not before shown. He invited me to join his hunting excursions, loaded me with presents, and made abundant professions of his desire to serve me.

"I was at first alarmed at these indications, and resolved to return with my wife to Toledo, a resolution which my better angel certainly suggested to me. In fact, if I had deprived the Duke of all opportunities of seeing my wife, I should have escaped all the evils which have fallen upon me; but my confidence revived when I reflected on the virtues of my wife. I flattered myself, too, that a person whom I had married without a fortune, and whom I had raised from an inferior station in society, could not possibly repay my benefits with ingratitude. Alas! little did I know her heart. The two great vices of the sex, ambition and vanity, exercised their full empire there.

"As soon as the Duke had found an opportunity of apprising her of his sentiments, she seems to have congratulated herself on having made so brilliant a conquest. To be worshipped by His Excellence, was an exquisite gratification to her pride. Her head was filled with the dreams of inflated consequence. She valued herself more, and loved me less. Nay, all that I had done for her, instead of exciting her gratitude, now called forth only her contempt. She began to think that her beauty might have won a worthier husband; and she did not doubt, but that if this distinguished nobleman had seen her before her marriage, he would have shared with her his rank and fortune. Carried away by these silly ideas, and influenced by his prodigal presents, she abandoned herself to the criminal pursuit of the Duke. A secret correspondence was carried on by them, of which I had not the least suspicion; but it unfortunately happened that my eyes were at length opened to my situation. Returning one day from the chase at an earlier hour than usual, I entered the apartment of my wife when I was least expected. She had just received a letter from her lover, to which she was preparing to reply. Her embarrassment at my sudden appearance was sufficiently evident to fill me with the greatest uneasiness, and seeing the pen in her hand, I desired her to let me see what she had been writing. Her refusal led me to conclude that I was betrayed; and it was only to actual force that I was indebted for the satisfaction of my jealous curiosity. In spite of her opposition, I plucked from her bosom a letter, of the contents of which I have but too faithful a recollection.

"'How long am I doomed to languish in the expectation of a second delightful interview? How long will you persist in permitting me to

nourish the sweetest hopes, which you cruelly delay to realise? Don Juan is absent every day in the city, or at the chase, and why should we not avail ourselves of these opportunities? Show some commiseration for the ardent passion which is destroying me. Grant me at least your pity. If it is the greatest of pleasures to obtain the object of our wishes, think what a torture it must be to wait long for its possession.'

"Transports of rage overpowered me when I had perused this production. My hand was already on my dagger, and the first impulse of my frenzy was to lay dead at my feet the faithless woman who had dared to sport with my honour. A moment's reflection convinced me that this would be an imperfect revenge, to the full satisfaction of which another victim was required. I suppressed my rising fury; I assumed a tranquil air, and addressed my wife with as little appearance of emotion as possible: — 'You have been to blame,' I said, 'to listen for a moment to the Duke's solicitations. The splendour of his rank ought not to have made any impression on you; but I am aware that youth is dazzled by these vanities, and that, I trust, is the extent of your offence. I therefore look upon your indiscretion as not unpardonable, provided you listen henceforward to the dictates of your duty, and endeavour to prove yourself worthy of my affection, and of the lenity I have now shown to you.'

"With these words I left her apartment, and endeavoured in solitude to subdue the violent transports of my passion. If I could not regain my peace of mind, I at least succeeded in affecting an air of tranquillity for several days, at the end of which I pretended that business of importance required my presence in Toledo. Having informed my wife that I was under the necessity of quitting her for some time, and besought her to regulate her conduct carefully during my absence, I took my departure.

"Instead, however, of continuing my journey to Toledo, I took advantage of the night to return secretly to my house, where I concealed myself in the chamber of one of my domestics, in whom I could confide. From this station I could see everybody that entered the house. I fully expected that the Duke would be informed of my departure, and that he would not fail to profit by such a favourable opportunity. I then proposed to surprise them together, and to enjoy a signal revenge. It so happened, however, that I was deceived in all these anticipations; I could not perceive any indications of the expected arrival of my enemy. Everything, on the contrary, proceeded with the greatest regularity; and when three days had elapsed without the Duke or any of his retainers making their appearance, I began to believe that my wife had really repented of her error, and had broken off all correspondence with her lover.

"Under this revulsion of feeling, I dismissed all further thoughts of revenge, and yielding to the dictates of love, which returned with increased force after the exhaustion of my indignation, I proceeded to my

wife's apartment; I embraced her with transport, assuring her that she was fully restored to my esteem and love. I acknowledged that I had not been at Toledo; that the journey was only pretended, that I might prove her fidelity. 'But,' I continued, 'you must forgive me for employing this stratagem. My jealousy had some foundation; I doubted whether you had strength of mind to throw off those false ideas to which you had given way; but, heaven be thanked, I find that you have seen your error, and henceforward we will hope for undisturbed tranquillity.'

"These words appeared to affect my wife, who could not refrain from tears. 'It was an unhappy hour for me, indeed,' she replied, 'when I gave you the slightest reason to suspect my fidelity. The misconduct which so justly raised your displeasure, appears detestable in my eyes. The tears I have shed might suffice to wash away the traces of my folly; but all my sorrow, all my remorse, cannot restore me to the place I once held in your heart!' 'It is all forgiven,' I exclaimed; 'everything is forgotten; your sincere repentance makes amends for all!' I was, in fact, much moved by her apparent contrition, and from that moment began to regard her with as much affection as formerly. We resumed our usual habits of life, and enjoyed again the happiness which had been so cruelly disturbed. It seemed indeed to be my wife's wish to efface every vestige of doubt from my mind; and she took more pains to please me than she had ever done before. Her affection displayed itself with increased vivacity, and I almost congratulated myself on the misunderstanding which had produced such pleasing results.

"At this period I was attacked by a distemper, which, though not very formidable, alarmed my wife much. You can hardly conceive the terror she displayed. She spent the whole day in my chamber, and though I slept in a separate apartment, she insisted on coming two or three times in the course of the night, to learn in person how I was going on. With the most earnest attention she anticipated all my wants. One would have thought her existence had depended on mine. For my part, I was so struck with the marks of tenderness which she lavished on me, that I was never weary of assuring her how sensible I was of her cares. It will soon appear what sincerity there was in all this display.

"My health was now pretty well re-established, when one night I was awakened by my valet, who seemed much agitated. 'I am sorry, Sir,' he said, 'to interrupt your repose; but I think it my duty not to conceal a fact that has come to my knowledge. The Duke de Naxera is at this moment with your lady.'

"This intelligence came upon me like a thunderbolt. I looked at my valet for some time in silence; in fact, I could not speak. The more I reflected on the account he gave me, the less I was inclined to credit it. 'It is utterly impossible,' I cried, 'that my wife can be guilty of such monstrous perfidy. You know not what you say.' My valet assured me

that there was no doubt of the facts, and that he had not relied on questionable grounds. He had suspected that, since my illness, the Duke had been introduced every night into my wife's chamber, and having concealed himself for the purpose of ascertaining the truth, he had obtained but too certain evidence of my dishonour.

"I sprung from my bed like a madman, seized my sword, and rushed to my wife's apartment, followed by my servant. The Duke was in fact there, and rising from the bed, as we approached, he seized a pistol, advanced towards me, and fired. In his hurry and confusion he missed his aim; and in another moment I sprung upon him, and plunged my sword into his heart. I then turned to my wife, who lay more dead than alive. 'Infamous wretch!' I exclaimed, 'take the reward thy treachery deserves!' and with these words, I buried in her bosom the weapon still reeking with the blood of her admirer.

"I am far from justifying my violence, Don Fabrique; and I must confess, that I might have sufficiently punished that unhappy woman, without having her blood upon my hands; but what man can, under such circumstances, continue master of his reason? Recollect all the attentions she had bestowed on me during my illness; all the exaggerated demonstrations of affection; all the enormity of her treachery and deceit; and then say if a husband, animated with such just indignation, is not worthy, at least, of pardon.

"A few words more will complete this tragic story. When I had satiated my revenge, I was well aware that I had no time to lose. I knew that the family of the Duke would pursue me, wherever I might be in Spain; and that as the influence I could exert was very far inferior to theirs, I could only find safety in a foreign land. Before daybreak, I left my house, attended only by my valet, taking with me two of my best horses, and all the money and jewels I could collect. I took the road to Valencia, with the design of embarking in the first vessel which might sail for Italy. I have only further to say, that as I was passing near the wood where you were, I met Donna Rosaura, and complying with her request, followed her, and assisted her in putting a stop to your combat."

When the Toledan had finished his story, Don Fabrique assured him that he had taken a just revenge upon the Duke de Naxera. "Dismiss all uneasiness," said he, "as to any pursuit which his relations may institute. Make my house your abode, till you find a convenient opportunity of passing into Italy. My uncle is the governor of Valencia; you will find a safer refuge here than elsewhere, and you will have for your host, one who henceforward binds himself to you by the ties of the sincerest friendship."

Don Juan made a suitable reply to these generous professions, and accepted the asylum which had so opportunely presented itself. They frequently went in company to the house of Donna Rosaura, by whom the assiduous attentions of Don Fabrique were received with the same indif-

ference. He felt greatly mortified at his ill success, and sometimes complained to his friend, who endeavoured to encourage him, by representing to him that the most insensible heart must yield to continued marks of devotion; that it was a lover's duty to wait with patience for this favourable change; that he had only to persevere, and, sooner or later, his mistress would reward his constancy. Such topics as these, though well supported by the lessons of experience, could convey no confidence to the apprehensive lover; he despaired of ever being able to touch the heart of the lovely widow, and this fear threw him into a state of languor and despondency, which excited the pity of Don Juan. The latter, however, soon became an object of much greater commiseration.

Notwithstanding the very sufficient reasons which this gentleman had to hold the fair sex in eternal odium, after the notable treachery he had experienced, he could not protect his heart against the charms of Donna Rosaura. At the same time, he was far from abandoning himself to a passion so injurious to the duty he owed his friend; he contended vigorously against it, and feeling assured that he could only overcome it by absenting himself from the object which had excited it, he resolved to see that lady no more. Conformably with this determination, he always excused himself from accompanying his friend in his frequent visits to her house. On those occasions the lady remarked his absence, and never failed to inquire why Don Juan had ceased to visit her. At length, when she was one day urging her customary inquiries, Don Fabrique informed her, with a smile, that his friend had his own reasons for his conduct. "Reasons for avoiding me!" exclaimed the lady, "and what can they be?" "Madam," replied Mendoza, "when I urged him to accompany me to-day, and showed some surprise at his refusal, he informed me in confidence — and to explain his conduct I must make the same communication to you — that he has formed a tender attachment, and that the short stay he is making in this city renders every moment of consequence to him." "This is a very unsatisfactory reason," replied the widow, with a heightened complexion. "Because he is a lover, is he to be permitted to forsake his friends?" Don Fabrique remarked the rising colour of his mistress, but he attributed it simply to her wounded vanity, and imagined that the mortification of seeing herself neglected had excited her blush. In that supposition he was mistaken; a more lively sentiment than vanity occasioned the emotion which she could not repress; but, anxious to dissimulate her feelings, she gave a turn to the conversation, and during the remainder of the interview affected a cheerfulness, which might have baffled the penetration of Mendoza, even if he had not been, as he was, wholly without suspicion.

When Donna Rosaura found herself alone, she abandoned herself to a train of new and unpleasant ideas. She now felt for the first time all the force of the inclination she had conceived for Don Juan, and thinking that she had more cause to complain of his insensibility than was really the

case, she could not suppress a sigh. "What unjust and barbarous power," said she, "delights in exciting love which cannot be returned? I am indifferent to Don Fabrique, who adores me, and Don Juan, to whom my heart inclines but too strongly, has attached himself to another. Ah, Mendoza! reproach me no longer for my coldness — thou art amply revenged by thy friend!"

This mingled pang of grief and jealousy found some relief in a shower of tears; but hope, which seldom fails to mitigate the lover's pain, soon began to present brighter prospects to her view. She conjectured that her rival might perhaps not be very formidable; that Don Juan had probably yielded less to her charms than to her complaisance, and that such feeble bonds might not be very difficult to break asunder. To enable herself to form some opinion on this subject, she resolved to have an interview with him, and conveyed to him an intimation of her wishes. Don Juan obeyed the summons, and when they were alone, the lady commenced her investigation.

"I could not readily have believed," said she, "that love could make any cavalier forget what he owed to the fair sex, yet they tell me, Don Juan, that you have yielded up your heart, and that for this reason, you have withdrawn from my society. I think I have grounds for complaining of your conduct; yet I cannot believe that in taking this step you have acted without compulsion. Confess at once that your mistress has forbidden you to see me: that may be some excuse. I know very well that lovers are not masters of their own actions, and that they dare not disobey the commands of their mistresses."

"Madam," answered the Toledan, "I candidly own that you have reason to be surprised at my conduct but I must beseech you not to call upon me to justify it. Be satisfied when I inform you that I have substantial grounds for what I have done." "Whatever these may be," replied the lady, with emotion, "I insist upon your explaining yourself fully." "Well, Madam," rejoined Don Juan, "you shall be obeyed; but do not throw the blame on me, if you are thus made acquainted with more than you would wish to know."

"You have heard from Don Fabrique the particulars of the transaction which drove me from Castile. I fled from Toledo with my heart full of indignation against all the sex, whom I defied ever to ensnare me more. In this stubborn temper I approached Valencia, and sustained your first glances, which is more, perhaps, than any man ever did before, without being vanquished; I even saw you again and again with impunity, but dearly, alas! have I since atoned for my temerity. Your beauty, your intelligence, your united charms, at last obtained a complete victory. I am conquered — I am the victim of the most intense passion that you are capable of inspiring. You now know why I have shunned you. The amour in which I was said to be engaged is wholly imaginary. I suggested this,

as a confidential communication, to Don Fabrique, that I might not, by my continued refusal to visit you, excite in him any suspicion of the real cause."

This information, which was wholly unexpected by Donna Rosaura, delighted her so much, that she could not disguise her feelings. Indeed, she did not exert herself greatly to repress them, and instead of assuming a severe air, she cast a tender glance on the Toledan, and replied: "Well, Don Juan, since you have unbosomed yourself to me, I will be as sincere with you. Listen to me.

"Utterly indifferent to the attentions of Don Alvaro Ponce, and little regarding the attachment of Mendoza, my time was passing pleasantly and tranquilly away, when we chanced to meet for the first time on that unhappy day. Notwithstanding my agitation at the moment, my attention was attracted by the grace with which your services were proffered; and the manner in which you separated the two incensed rivals, gave me a high opinion of your courage and address. The expedient which you suggested for the termination of their dispute, displeased me. I could not, without much pain, come to the resolution of deciding in favour of one or the other. To tell you the plain truth, I believe that some part of my repugnance might be attributed to yourself; for at the very moment, when yielding to necessity, my tongue pronounced in favour of Don Fabrique, I felt my heart give its suffrage to the stranger. Since that day, which, after the avowal you have made, I will call a happy one, the knowledge of your merit has added to the partiality I then conceived for you."

"You see," she continued, "that I do not affect to conceal my sentiments. I divulge them to you with the same frank sincerity that actuated me when I told Mendoza he had no place in my affections. A woman who has the misfortune to entertain a passion for a person who can never return it, has good reason for putting a strong constraint upon herself, and punishing her weakness by at least imposing on it an eternal silence; but it appears to me that she may, without hesitation, disclose an innocent attachment to a man whose intentions are honourable. I am, I confess, delighted to hear you own your love, and I return thanks to heaven, which has, no doubt, destined us for each other."

At these words the lady paused, in the hope of hearing from the lips of Don Juan a full expression of all the rapturous joy and gratitude with which she believed he was inspired; but instead of exhibiting any symptoms of pleasure at the information he had received, he preserved a gloomy and thoughtful silence.

"What is the meaning of this, Don Juan?" she resumed. "When I forget the proud reserve of my sex, and lay open my heart to you, a condescension for which any other man would perhaps have felt some gratitude, you repress the feelings which such a declaration must surely have excited. You are silent, you are sad; your eyes betray your melan-

choly. Ah, Don Juan, what an unexpected effect has my weak confession produced!"

"What other effect, Madam," replied the Toledan, gloomily, "could it possibly produce upon a heart like mine? The more you demonstrate the partiality you have conceived for me, the more miserable I become. You know as well as I, all that Mendoza has done for me. You are aware of the intimate friendship which unites us. Can I build my happiness upon the ruin of his dearest hopes?"

"As to that," replied the lady, "you are much too scrupulous. I have promised nothing to Don Fabrique. I am at liberty to bestow my hand upon you without incurring his just reproach, and you may receive it without subjecting yourself to the imputation of having stolen it from him. The idea of your friend's unhappiness must unquestionably give you some pain, but is that consideration of sufficient weight, Don Juan, to counterbalance the happiness which is before us?"

"It is, Madam," replied the Toledan, with a firm voice. "A friend like Mendoza has greater power over my feelings than you imagine. If you could possibly estimate all the tenderness, all the force of our friendship, how worthy would you find me of your pity! Nothing that concerns Don Fabrique is concealed from me; my interests and his are the same. The slightest matter in which I am interested cannot escape his attention; and to say all in one word, I share his heart with you. Alas, to have enabled me to reap the benefit of your kindness, I ought to have been aware of its existence before I had formed so firm and intimate a friendship. Enraptured with the honour of pleasing you, I should then have regarded Mendoza only as a rival. My heart, put upon its guard against the approaches of his partiality, would have made no return to it, and I should not have incurred the obligations under which I at present lie. That time, Madam, is, unfortunately, past. I have received every possible assistance from his hands. I have yielded to the attachment I felt for him. Compelled as much by gratitude as by my own inclinations, I am reduced to the painful necessity of declining the happy fortune that might otherwise have awaited me."

As he finished these words, the tears rose in Donna Rosaura's eyes, which she attempted to wipe away. This gesture deeply affected the Toledan, whose firmness began to give way; he could no longer answer for his resolution. "Farewell, Madam," he continued, in a voice broken with sighs — "farewell! I must fly from your presence if I mean to preserve my honour. I cannot bear your tears; they arm you with too much persuasion. I must take an eternal leave of you, and weep over the loss of those charms which I am bound to offer up at the shrine of an inexorable friendship." He then exerted the little firmness which he yet possessed, and hastily withdrew.

The widow of Cifuentes, after his departure, was agitated by a thousand

confused sensations. Amongst these predominated the shame of having declared her sentiments to a man who had been able to throw off her charms. She could not, however, doubt that he was strongly attached to her, and that a regard for his friend's interest had alone induced him to reject the hand she had offered. She was reasonable enough to admire so singular an effort of friendship, instead of being offended at it. Nevertheless, under the influence of the mortification which always attends the frustration of our favourite designs, she resolved to set off the next morning for the country, in order to soothe her grief, or, it might rather be said, to augment it; since solitude is better adapted to reinforce, than to diminish, the violence of love.

Don Juan, on his part, not having met with Mendoza on his return home, shut himself up in his apartment, and gave himself up to his grief. After the effort he had made for the sake of his friend, he thought he might at least be allowed to breathe a sigh without reproach. Don Fabrique, who shortly after returned, interrupted his meditations, and apprehending from his appearance that he was unwell, he exhibited so much anxiety, that Don Juan was obliged to relieve him, by assuring him that he stood in need only of repose. On this representation, Mendoza withdrew, that his friend might retire to rest, but with so dejected an air, that the Toledan felt still more acutely his very unfortunate position. "Good heavens! why should the tenderest of friendships be thus converted into the greatest affliction of my life?" was the reflection that passed through his mind.

On the following day, Don Fabrique had not yet risen, when he was informed that Dona Rosaura had departed with all her establishment for her country seat at Villa Real, where it would appear that she intended to remain for some time. He was more chagrined at the secrecy which had been observed in taking this step, than afflicted by the absence of the object of his love. Without knowing in what way to account for her conduct, he could not help thinking it was a very unfavourable omen. He soon arose with the intention of visiting his friend, as well to learn the state of his health, as to converse with him on the subject of his alarm. But as he was on the point of leaving his chamber, he was prevented by the entrance of Don Juan, who came to relieve his uneasiness, and to inform him that his health was perfectly restored. "This good news," replied Mendoza, "in some measure indemnifies me for the unpleasant intelligence that I have received." The Toledan requested him to explain himself; and Don Fabrique, after his domestics had left the room, proceeded; "Donna Rosaura has set off this morning for the country, where she is expected to remain some time. This departure surprises me. Why has it been concealed from me? — what think you, Don Juan, have I not reason to be alarmed?"

But Don Juan took care not to acquaint Mendoza with his real opinion on this affair, endeavouring, on the contrary, to persuade him that Donna

Rosaura might be allowed to visit the country, without giving him cause for unhappiness. Mendoza, however, was not to be so amused, and interrupted his arguments, which he treated very lightly. "All this talk," said he, "cannot dispel the suspicions which agitate me. It is possible that I may unconsciously have done something which has offended Donna Rosaura, and to punish me, she may have quitted me without condescending even to explain the nature of my crime. However this may be, I am determined to remain no longer in suspense. Come, my friend, let us follow her. I will give orders to have our horses in readiness." "My advice," replied the Toledan, "is to take no person with you. There ought to be no witnesses of such an explanation." "Your presence cannot be objected to," said Don Fabrique; "Donna Rosaura is well aware that you are informed of all that passes in my breast. She has a regard for you, and far from causing me any embarrassment, you will be of great service to me in effecting a reconciliation." Don Juan still persisted in his refusal — "My presence, Don Fabrique," he urged, "cannot possibly be of any use. I beseech you to depart alone." "My dear friend," answered Don Fabrique, with equal obstinacy, "we will go together. I must rely upon your friendship to indulge me in this." "This is downright tyranny," exclaimed the Toledan, with an air of vexation; "why do you exact from my friendship a concession which I ought not to make?"

The abrupt manner in which Don Juan uttered these words, and the words themselves, which Don Fabrique could not understand, filled him with amazement. He fixed his eyes for some time upon his friend. "Don Juan," said he, "what is the meaning of the words I have just heard? What a frightful suspicion has suggested itself to me. Put an end to this hateful state of constraint on your part, and anxiety on mine. Tell me at once the real cause of your evident repugnance to accompany me."

"It was my earnest wish," replied the Toledan, "to conceal it from you; but since you have yourself compelled me to disclose it, I will no longer make a mystery of it. We must cease, my dear friend, to think the uniformity of our sentiments a subject for congratulation: it is unfortunately, only too perfect. The attractions which subdued you, have not had less influence on your friend; and Donna Rosaura —" "Is it possible you can be my rival?" exclaimed Don Fabrique, turning pale as he spoke. "As soon as I perceived my attachment," proceeded Don Juan, "I struggled to repress it. I constantly avoided Donna Rosaura, as you well know. You have even reproached me with my obstinacy in that respect. I at least obtained the victory over my passion, if I could not wholly destroy it. Yesterday, however, the lady intimated to me that she wished to see me at her own house. I waited upon her; she inquired why I appeared to avoid her with such care? I alleged some fictitious excuses, which she rejected. At length I was compelled to acknowledge the real cause; and on making this declaration, I expected that she would approve the resolution I had made

to fly from her presence; but, such is my singular destiny — how shall I explain it to you, and yet, Mendoza, you must be told — that I found Donna Rosaura entertained a preference for me!"

No man possessed a more rational mind, or milder manners, than Don Fabrique; but at these words he gave way to an impulse of fury, and indignantly interrupted his friend — "Stop, Don Juan," he cried, "stab me at once, rather than proceed with this fatal narrative. Not content with avowing yourself my rival, you even tell me that you are successful in your love! Good heavens! to dare to make a confidential disclosure like this to me! This is too rude a trial of our friendship. — Our friendship! It exists no longer. It ceased from the time when you conceived the perfidious sentiments you have now declared. What an error was mine! Generous, magnanimous as I thought you, you hesitate not to nourish an affection which is inconsistent with my happiness. You are a false friend. This unexpected blow overwhelms me: its force is aggravated by the hand which deals it." "Do me more justice," interrupted the Toledan, in his turn, "than to think and speak of me thus. Be patient for a few moments. Whatever I am, I am not a treacherous friend. Listen to me, and you will soon regret that you have applied that odious appellation to me."

He then narrated to him all that had passed between the widow of Don Andrea de Cifuentes and himself, the tender confession which she had made to him, and the attempts she had made to induce him to abandon himself to his passion. He repeated also the answer which he had made to these propositions; and as he made more and more apparent the firmness with which he had acted, Don Fabrique felt his indignation gradually subside. "At length," continued Don Juan, "friendship obtained the victory over love. I refused the offered heart of Donna Rosaura. She wept. I saw her tears, and heaven can witness the agony I endured at the sight. I cannot yet, without trembling, reflect upon the danger to which I was exposed. I began to feel as if I was acting too barbarous a part, and for a few moments, Mendoza, my fidelity to you was shaken. But I did not give myself up to this weakness, and, by a sudden departure, I released myself from that dangerous thraldom. It is not enough, however, that I have hitherto escaped without dishonour, I must provide against the future. I will remain here no longer, nor again expose myself to the glances of Donna Rosaura. Will Don Fabrique, after this explanation, persist in charging me with ingratitude and perfidy?"

"No," replied Mendoza, embracing him with warmth; "No! I esteem you wholly blameless. I now see the whole affair in a proper light. Pardon those unjust reproaches which you must ascribe to the frenzy of a lover, from whom all his hopes are torn at once. Alas! how could I believe that Donna Rosaura would see you often without loving you — without feeling the force of those attractions, which have acquired such influence over me. But you are a faithful friend. I impute all my unhappiness to my evil for-

tune alone; and so far from hating you as its cause, I feel more strongly attached to you than ever. Is it possible, that for my sake you renounce the possession of Donna Rosaura? Can you make this great sacrifice to our friendship, and shall I not be deeply sensible of its value? — Can you vanquish your passion, and shall I not make an effort to subdue mine? I ought not to yield to you in generosity. Follow, my dear friend, the inclination of your heart. Marry the widow of Cifuentes. My heart may mourn in secret, but it shall not prevent me from contributing to make you happy."

"Not upon these terms," replied Zarata; "my passion for her, I confess, is violent, but I value your repose more than my own gratification." "And ought the repose of Donna Rosaura," answered Don Fabrique, "to be a matter of indifference to you? The affection she entertains for you has decided my fate. I should be in no respect benefited if you should absent yourself from her, and in some distant land drag on a miserable existence, with the intention of surrendering to me the object of our love. If I have hitherto failed to please her, I am very certain that I am never destined to succeed. Heaven has reserved that happiness for you. She loved you from the first moment she saw you. She has a natural predilection for you. In one word, you alone can make her happy. Accept, then, the hand which she extends to you. Let your mutual bliss be complete. Abandon me to my misery, and be not weak enough to make three persons wretched, when all the severity of fate can be directed against one alone."

This generous contention was maintained for some time with equal warmth, but neither of the friends consenting to avail himself of the generosity of the other, they remained for some days in a state of painful suspense. They ceased to speak of Donna Rosaura; they no longer ventured to pronounce her name. But whilst, in the city of Valencia, friendship was thus effecting a victory over love, the latter was governing elsewhere despotic sway; and, as if he intended to take a full revenge, would permit no opposition to his authority.

Withdrawn to her country seat at Villa Real, situated near the sea, Donna Rosaura abandoned herself to her sorrowful and tender reflections. All her thoughts were devoted to Don Juan, and she could not prevail on herself to abandon all hope, although, after so remarkable a demonstration of the strength of his friendship for Don Fabrique, there appeared little reason to encourage such an expectation.

One evening, about sunset, whilst she was enjoying on the sea shore the coolness of the breeze, in company with one of her women, her attention was attracted by a small boat which had just reached the land. It carried seven or eight men, of a very suspicious appearance, whom, after surveying them more narrowly, and scrutinising them with some curiosity, she concluded to be masked. This was, in fact, the case, and they were moreover completely armed. She felt some alarm at this sight,

and anticipating nothing good from their visit to these shores, she immediately turned, and hastened to regain her home. She occasionally looked behind her as she went, and observing that the crew had landed, and were beginning to follow her, she began to run as fast as possible; but as she by no means rivalled Atalanta in this exercise, and as the masked pursuers were active and strong, she was overtaken and stopped by them, just as she had reached her own door.

The cries of the lady and her attendant soon drew together some of the servants, who spread a general alarm; and all the retinue of Donna Rosaura ran to the scene of action, having armed themselves in the best way they could, some with pitchforks and some with clubs. In the mean time, two of the most robust of the assailers had laid hands upon the mistress and her maid, and in spite of all their resistence carried them towards the skiff; while the remainder of the band made head against the people of Donna Rosaura, by whom they were now vigorously attacked. The conflict lasted some time; but the ravishers at length succeeded in effecting the object of their enterprise, and regained their vessel, fighting as they retreated. And indeed they had no time to lose; for they had not yet all reëmbarked, when they perceived a troop of horsemen advancing on the road which led to Valencia, riding at full speed, and apparently with the intention of assisting Donna Rosaura. On seeing this, the strangers lost no time in putting out to sea, and thus disappointed all the hopes which the near approach of the cavaliers had excited. These were no other than Don Fabrique and his friend Don Juan. The former had that morning received a letter, informing him that it had been ascertained that Don Alvaro Ponce was in the island of Majorca, where he had equipped a small vessel, and engaged the services of a band of desperadoes, by whose assistance he proposed to carry off Donna Rosaura, when she should afford an opportunity by visiting her country seat. Acting upon this information, Don Juan and himself, with their attendants, left Valencia without loss of time, for the purpose of putting the lady on her guard against the meditated abduction. While yet at some distance, they had observed a crowd of persons assembled on the shore, who seemed to be in a state of conflict; and suspecting that this tumult might turn out to be the realization of their fears, they had urged their horses to their utmost speed, to baffle, if possible, the project of Don Alvaro. Notwithstanding all their exertion, however, they arrived only in time to witness the very catastrophe which it had been their object to prevent.

Proud of the success of his expedition, Don Alvaro Ponce in the mean time pushed from the shore with his beautiful prize, and directed the course of his skill towards a small armed vessel which was standing out at sea, awaiting their return. Never was any grief more heartfelt and impassioned than that of Mendoza and Don Juan; they loaded Don Alvaro with execrations, and made all the shore resound with complaints,

equally affecting and useless. The example set by the masters was not lost upon the attendants and the household of the injured lady; who showed no disposition to economise their lamentations; that luckless coast seemed to have become the haunt of fury, desolation, and despair. It may be questioned whether the court of Sparta exhibited such symptoms of consternation, when it was first discovered that the fair Helen had eloped with her gallant Phrygian guest.

Although the servants of Donna Rosaura had not been able to prevent the outrage upon their lady, they had at least shown great courage in opposing it; and some of the people of Don Alvaro Ponce had experienced the effects of their zeal. One of these, in particular, had received so severe a wound, as to be incapacitated from following his comrades, who, on their retreat, left him stretched on the ground with little appearance of life. This man was recognised as having been in the service of Don Alvaro, and as he still breathed, he was conveyed to the house, where every means was employed to restore him to his senses. This object was at last accomplished, although the great quantity of blood he had lost left him in a state of extreme weakness. To prevail on him to reveal what he knew, promises were made to him that his recovery should be carefully attended to, and that he should not be delivered up to justice, if he would discover the place to which it was his employer's intention to carry Donna Rosaura.

Although there was little prospect of his ever reaping the benefit of these indulgences, he was not the less influenced by them. He collected the little strength he had left, and in a feeble voice confirmed the intelligence which had been transmitted to Don Fabrique; to this he added, that Don Alvaro designed to conduct the lady to Lapari in the island of Sardinia, where he had a relation possessed of sufficient authority to ensure him a safe asylum.

This communication somewhat alleviated the despair of Don Fabrique and his friend. They left the wounded man in the house of Donna Rosaura, where he soon after died, and returned to Valencia to consider the steps which they ought to take; nor were they long in coming to the resolution to pursue their common enemy, and attack him in his chosen retreat. They soon after embarked together at Denia, without attendants, and sailed for Port Mahon, in the expectation of there finding an opportunity to proceed to Sardinia. In fact, they had no sooner reached Port Mahon, than they found a vessel about to weigh anchor for Cagliari, in which they immediately secured their passage.

They set sail with a very favourable breeze; but when they had proceeded a few leagues on their voyage, they were becalmed, and the wind having changed in the night, they were obliged to tack, in the hope of its moving into a more friendly quarter. In this manner they sailed on for three days; on the fourth, early in the afternoon, they discovered a vessel,

which approached in full sail. They at first supposed it to be a merchant-vessel, but seeing that it approached almost within cannon-shot without hoisting colours, they no longer had any doubt that it was a corsair, in which opinion they were not mistaken. It was a pirate vessel, belonging to Tunis. At first the infidels imagined that their intended prey would surrender without a struggle; but when they saw the cannon pointed, and every preparation made for battle, they concluded that they had a serious business on hand. They furled their sails, and cleared their deck for action.

The battle began with a brisk cannonade, in which the Christians seemed to have the advantage, till an Algerian ship, larger and better armed than either of the combatants, made her appearance, and approaching the Spanish vessel in full sail, placed her between two fires. At this unexpected attack, the crew of the latter lost all hope; and not venturing to continue so unequal a contest, ceased their fire. The Algerian then hailed them, by the mouth of a slave, who shouted to them in Spanish, that if they wished for quarter, they must strike to the Algerian flag. The Turkish flag, of green silk, sprinkled with silver crescents, was then hoisted. Considering all further resistance as useless, the Christians no longer attempted a defence. They abandoned themselves to all the grief which the prospect of slavery must excite in the breast of freemen; and the commander, apprehending that a longer delay might irritate their barbarian conquerors, lowered his colours, and threw himself with some of his crew into a boat, to yield himself prisoner to the Algerian captain. On the other hand, the latter despatched a party of his crew to board the Spanish vessel, or, in other words to pillage it thoroughly. The Tunisian corsair showed no less alacrity in pursuing the same course, so that the passengers in this unlucky vessel were disarmed and stripped in a moment. They were then removed into the Algerian ship, where they were divided by lot between the two conquerors.

It would have been some consolation to Mendoza and his friend, if fortune had delivered them into the hands of the same master. The weight of their chains would have been more endurable, if they could have borne them together. But, as if they were doomed to all the aggravation of which their condition was susceptible, Don Fabrique became the slave of the Tunisian rover, and Don Juan fell to the share of the Algerian. It would be difficult to describe the despair of these friends, when they were compelled to part. They threw themselves at the feet of the pirates, conjuring them not to tear them asunder. But these Turks, whose barbarian cruelty was proof against the most affecting scenes, were not to be persuaded. On the contrary, as they had reason to believe these two captives were persons of some consequence, and might pay a considerable ransom, they resolved that one should be assigned to each of the victors.

The unfortunate cavaliers, perceiving that they were endeavouring to make an impression on hearts wholly destitute of feeling, looked mournfully at each other, and expressed in their countenances the depth of their affliction. But when the partition of the spoil was completed, and the Tunisian pirate prepared to return to his vessel with the share of plunder allotted to him, it seemed as if the two friends would have died in the paroxysm of their grief; Mendoza ran to the Toledan, locked him in his arms, and exclaimed, "Must we then be separated? What a dreadful necessity! The audacity of that infamous ravisher must escape with impunity, and we are even forbidden to unite our sorrow and despair. Ah, Don Juan, how have we so offended, that the vengeance of heaven should fall so heavily upon us?" "We need not seek far for the cause of our misfortunes," replied Don Juan; "the death of the two culprits whom I sacrificed to my revenge, however excusable in the eyes of men, has, no doubt, excited the Divine indignation, which pursues you also, as guilty of entertaining a friendly feeling towards a wretch, for whose punishment justice loudly calls."

Whilst they thus conversed, they wept so profusely, and were so violently agitated, that the other slaves were scarcely less affected by the sight, than by their own peculiar sufferings. But the Tunisian sailors, more barbarous, if possible, than their masters, finding that Mendoza was tardy in leaving the ship, dragged him brutally from the arms of the Toledan, and hurried him along, loading him all the while with blows. "Adieu, my dear friend," he cried, "I shall never see you more; Donna Rosaura is not avenged! The evils which these wretches can inflict upon me will be the lightest portion of my slavery."

Don Juan could make no reply. The manner in which he saw his friend treated had such an effect upon him, as to deprive him of the power of speech. As the order of our history requires us to follow the fortunes of the Toledan, we shall for the present leave Don Fabrique, proceeding on his way to Tunis.

The Algerian robber steered for his own harbour, where, immediately on his arrival, he carried his new slaves to the Pacha, and thence to the market-place, where it was the custom to offer them for sale. An officer of the Dey Mezomorto purchased Don Juan for his master, by whom he was sent to work in the gardens of the seraglio. Although this occupation was laborious enough to a man of his rank and habits, yet Don Juan found some consolation in the solitude which his work required, and in which he delighted. In the situation he was placed in, nothing could be more agreeable to him than the liberty of brooding over his misfortunes. Upon these his mind dwelt without intermission; and far from making any effort to detach itself from melancholy reflections, seemed to take increasing pleasure in recalling them again and again.

As he happened one day to be working in the garden, singing all the

while a melancholy song, the Dey, unseen by him, passed near and paused to listen. He was pleased with his voice, and from a momentary impulse of curiosity, approached and inquired his name. The Toledan informed him that he was called Alvaro. When he became the slave of the Dey, he had, according to the custom of persons in those circumstances, assumed a feigned name, and had selected this, because from the impression which the abduction of his mistress by Don Alvaro Ponce had made upon his mind, it occurred to him sooner than any other. Mezomorto, who understood the Spanish language tolerably well, put several questions to him respecting the manners of that country, and particularly as to the mode in which lovers endeavoured to make their addresses agreeable to the objects of their affection. To these inquiries Don Juan replied in a manner which was very satisfactory to the Dey.

"Alvaro," said the latter to him, "you seem to me to possess an intelligent mind, and to belong to a superior rank; but whoever you may really be, you have had the good fortune to please your master, and I wish to honour you with a mark of my confidence." At these words Don Juan threw himself at the feet of the Dey, and having kissed the hem of his garment, and pressed it to his eyes and his head rose and waited his commands. "As a commencement of the trust I mean to repose in you," said the Dey, "I must first inform you, that I have in my seraglio some of the handsomest women in Europe. Amongst the rest, there is one who surpasses all her competitors. I do not believe that the Grand Signor himself possesses so perfect a beauty, although his vessels bring him every day new contributions from every quarter of the world. Her countenance is like the reflection of the sun, and her mien reminds the spectator of the stem of the rose planted in the garden of Eram. You see that I am enchanted with her charms. But this miracle of nature, possessed of all these attractions, is buried in a deep melancholy, which neither time nor my attentions can dispel. Although fortune has placed her in my power, I have put no force upon her inclinations. I have restrained my passion, and, contrary to the custom of princes in such circumstances, who seek only for sensual gratifications, I have applied myself to win her love by the greatest indulgence, and by a profound respect which the meanest Mussulman would scorn to show to a Christian slave. Yet all my efforts tend only to aggravate her despair, and I begin to be weary of the contest. The idea of slavery makes no such deep impression on the mind of others; my favour has always succeeded in effacing it. This obstinate depression exhausts my patience. Yet before I determine to adopt another course, I wish to make one effort more, and with that view to avail myself of your mediation. As she is of the Christian faith, and a native of your country, she may perhaps repose confidence in you, and thus enable you to exercise a beneficial influence over her. Set before her the splendour of my rank and wealth. Inform her that I will raise her far above my other slaves. If everything

else fails, lead her to hope that she may one day even aspire to be the wife of Mezomorto; and assure her that I shall hold her in greater esteem, than if she were a Sultana bestowed upon me by the hand of the Grand Signor himself."

Don Juan prostrated himself a second time at the feet of his master, and although inwardly annoyed at the duty that was required from him, assured him that he would use every exertion to bring the matter to a successful issue. "It is enough," said Mezomorto; "leave your work and follow me. Though contrary to our customs, I shall admit you to an interview with this beautiful captive. But beware how you abuse my confidence. Torments unknown even to the Turks, would be the result of such temerity. Endeavour to dissipate her gloom, and remember that your liberty is gained when I am relieved from this perplexity." Don Juan quitted his work and followed the Dey, who had gone before to prepare the afflicted captive to receive his new intercessor.

He found his beautiful prisoner attended only by two female slaves, and these disappeared as soon as they saw the Dey approach. She received him with every mark of respect, but could not refrain from shuddering, which indeed was the case whenever he came into her presence. He perceived her emotion, and addressed her in an encouraging tone: "Amiable captive," said he, "I visit you for the purpose of informing you, that I find amongst my slaves a person of your nation, with whom, perhaps, it would give you pleasure to have an interview. If you have any desire to see him, I will give him permission to attend you, when you can converse with him if you please, even without the presence of witnesses." Being assured by the beautiful slave that his offer was received with gratitude, "I will immediately send him to you," said the Dey; "I shall be delighted if your melancholy should find any relief in his company." With these words he left the room, and meeting the Toledan, who had just arrived, he said to him in a low voice, "You may go in, and after your interview, you will come to my apartment, and give me an account of what passes between you."

Zarata accordingly advanced, and opening the door, saluted the lady, without raising his eyes from the ground; and she, on the other hand, received his salutation without observing him very attentively; but when after a few moments they looked at each other more earnestly, they simultaneously uttered a cry of surprise and of joy. "O heavens!" cried the Toledan, "is it not an empty vision that deceives my eyes? Is it in truth Donna Rosaura that I see?" "Ah! Don Juan," replied the fair captive, "can it be you who speak to me?" "Yes," replied he, tenderly kissing her hand, "it is himself. Recognise me and my love in these tears, which my eyes, overjoyed at the sight of you, cannot refrain from shedding. In these transports of pleasure, which your presence alone is capable of exciting, I no longer exclaim against fortune, since she has restored you to my arms. But whither is this excess of joy hurrying my thoughts? I forget that you

are in chains. Through what new caprice of fate are you placed in this situation? How were you enabled to extricate yourself from the power of the rash Don Alvaro? What anxiety have I suffered! How I tremble to hear that virtue may not have found timely aid from heaven!" "Heaven," replied Donna Rosaura, "has amply avenged me upon Don Alvaro Ponce. If I had time to inform you —" "You have sufficient leisure," interrupted Don Juan. "The Dey permits me to remain with you, and, what you will be surprised to hear, to converse with you without restraint. Let us avail ourselves of these fortunate moments; tell me all that has occurred from the time of your abduction to the present moment." "How have you learned," replied she, "that Don Alvaro was the person who carried me off?" "I am but too well informed on that point," rejoined Don Juan; and he then related in a few words the way in which that fact came to his knowledge, and how Mendoza and himself, having embarked for the purpose of rescuing her, and punishing the ravisher, had been made prisoners by the corsairs. When his narrative was finished, Donna Rosaura pursued her story in the following words: —

"I need not tell you that my surprise was great indeed when I found myself in the power of a troop of masked ruffians. I fainted away in the arms of the man who was carrying me, and when I recovered my senses, which did not happen for a considerable time, I found myself alone with Inez, one of my women, far out at sea, in the cabin of a vessel, which was pursuing her voyage in full sail.

"My attendant began to exhort me to be patient under this calamity; and from the drift of her conversation, I had reason to suspect that she was in league with my enemy. He dared to introduce himself to me, and throwing himself at my feet, 'I beseech you, madam,' he cried, 'to forgive Don Alvaro for employing the only means in his power to possess himself of you. You know the devotion I have paid to you, and with what a perfect attachment I contended with Don Fabrique for the prize of your approbation, up to the day when you declared your preference of him. If my passion for you had been of an ordinary description, I might have subdued it, and consoled myself elsewhere for my ill fortune; but fate has destined me to admire only your charms. Despised as I am, I am unable to emancipate myself from their influence. Yet fear nothing from the violence of my love. I have not been guilty of this attempt upon your liberty to subject your virtue to more unworthy outrage; and it is my ardent hope, that in the retirement to which I am now conducting you, an eternal and sacred bond may unite our fate for ever.' To this he added many other speeches, which I cannot now recall to mind; but from what he said, he seemed to think, that to compel me to marry him was by no means a tyrannical act, and that I ought rather to regard him as an impassioned lover, than as an insolent ravisher.

"During this address, I did nothing but weep and abandon myself to

my grief. He therefore left me to myself, without losing further time in vain persuasions; but, as he retired, I saw a sign of intelligence pass between him and Inez, from which I collected that he desired her to support with all her dexterity the arguments which he had been addressing to me.

"Inez did not fail to obey her instructions; she represented to me how necessary it was, after the publicity of my departure with him, to bestow my hand upon him, and sacrifice, to the preservation of my reputation, the feelings of my heart. To set before my eyes the prospect of such a detestable alliance, was not the way to assuage my grief, which I consequently indulged without restraint. Inez no longer knew what topics of consolation to suggest; but at this moment we heard a great uproar on deck, which attracted all our attention.

"This tumult amongst the retainers of Don Alvaro was occasioned by the appearance of a large vessel, which was approaching us in full sail; escape was impossible, as the stranger far outsailed us. As he drew near, he hailed us, and ordered us to send a boat on board, but Don Alvaro and his people, preferring death to submission, desperately resolved on fighting. The contest was furious; without describing it more particularly, it will suffice to say that it terminated in the destruction of Don Alvaro and all his crew, after every effort of desperate courage had been exerted in vain. We found that the large vessel, into which we were now transported, belonged to Mezomorto, and was commanded by Aby Aly Osman, one of his officers.

"Aby Aly, on his first interview with me, surveyed me for some time with attention, and perceiving that I was a Spaniard, he addressed me in the Castilian language: — 'Moderate your grief,' he said, 'be not too much afflicted by the unfortunate occurrence which has made you a slave. Unfortunate, do I call it? I should say that it is a happy incident, on which you should congratulate yourself. Beauty like yours was not intended to exercise a narrow empire over the Christian world alone. Heaven did not form you for the pleasure of that contemptible race. You are worthy of the love of the masters of the world; the Mussulmans alone are worthy of you. I shall without delay turn my course towards Algiers, for although I have not taken any other prize, I am convinced that the Dey, my master, will be satisfied with my conduct. He will unquestionably applaud the eagerness I shall have shown to place in his hands a beauty, who will be the delight of his heart, and the great ornament of his harem.

"At this address, which explained to me all the wretchedness of my situation, I redoubled my lamentations; but Aby Aly, who looked upon the subject of my fears in a very different light, only laughed at my cries, and steered for Algiers, while I indulged my grief without any restraint. At one time I addressed my passionate supplications to Heaven, and implored its aid; at another, I wished and hoped that we might be overtaken by some Christian vessel, or that the waves would swallow us up. Vain

expectations! we arrived without any accident at the port, and I was conducted to this palace, where I was presented to Mezomorto.

"As they spoke in the Turkish language, I could not understand the address of Aby Aly to his master on introducing me to him, nor the reply of the latter; but I collected from the gestures and looks of the Dey, that I was so unfortunate as to please him, and the discourse which he afterwards addressed to me in Spanish, confirmed my suspicions and completed my wretchedness.

"I threw myself at his feet, and offered any ransom he would name, but in vain. The offer of all my property could not tempt his avarice; he valued my person, he said, above all the riches of the earth. This apartment, the most magnificent in the palace, was prepared for me, and from that time to the present, the Dey has tried every means to dispel the melancholy which overwhelms me. He brings to me all the slaves of both sexes, who excel in singing or playing on any instrument. He has removed Inez, under the impression that she encouraged my gloomy thoughts, and I am waited upon by old slaves, who continually talk to me about the love their master entertains for me, and the endless pleasures that are reserved for me.

"All these attempts to divert my grief have produced only a contrary effect; nothing can afford me any consolation. A prisoner in this detestable palace, which never ceases to re-echo the cries of injured innocence, I suffer less from the loss of my liberty, than from the odious tenderness which the Dey professes for me. It is true that I have hitherto found in him only a submissive and respectful lover; but this does not divest me of an apprehension that, tired of a constraint to which he is unaccustomed, he may at last abuse his power. I am incessantly haunted by this dreadful fear, and every instant of my life brings with it a new pang."

Donna Rosaura could not finish her recital, without giving way to her tears. Don Juan was deeply moved. "It is not without reason, Madam," said he, "that your fancy represents to you the future in such frightful shapes. I am as much terrified as yourself. The assumed delicacy of the Dey is likely to be dismissed sooner than you might suppose. The gentle adorer will soon throw aside his pretended mildness. I am well assured of this, and see all the danger to which you are exposed. But," he continued, with an altered voice, "I shall not be a quiet witness. Slave as I am, my despair is to be dreaded. Before you shall suffer any indignity from Mezomorto, I will plunge my dagger into his bosom." "Ah, Don Juan," interrupted the lady, "what design do you meditate? I implore you not to yield to such rash thoughts. With what barbarities would his death be avenged! with what frightful torments! I shudder to think of them. And, after all, you would only expose yourself to a useless danger. By taking away the life of the Dey, would you restore me to liberty? Alas! I should perhaps be sold to some brutal master, who would treat me with less con-

sideration than Mezomorto has shown. Oh! heaven, it is thy justice that I implore; the wickedness of the tyrant's heart is known to thee. Thy word forbids me to release myself by my own hand, and it becomes thy province to prevent a crime which is hateful to thee."

"Yes," replied Zarata, "and heaven will prevent it. I already feel its inspirations. The project which at this moment suggests itself to me, is no doubt prompted by a superior power. The Dey has permitted me to speak to you, in order that I might persuade you to return his love. I must give him an account of what passes between us. In such an emergency, I must have recourse to dissimulation. I shall report to him that you are not inconsolable; that the treatment you have met from him begins to soothe your affliction, and that if he perseveres, he may hope for the most favourable result. You, on your part, will second my endeavours. When he next waits upon you, you will let him find you looking more than usually cheerful, and you will appear to take some degree of interest in his conversation."

"What constraint," interrupted Donna Rosaura. "How can a mind like mine, simple and sincere, succeed in such an attempt? And what benefit can we expect from such hateful deceit?" "The Dey," replied he, "will be delighted with the change, and will wish to complete his conquest. In the meantime, I will use every exertion to effect your deliverance. The task, I own, is difficult, but I am acquainted with an ingenious fellow-slave, whose assistance will, I hope, be of the greatest use to us." "It is enough," replied Rosaura; "I will do all that you desire, since my misfortunes leave me no alternative. Go, Don Juan, exert all your faculties in rescuing me from this dreadful situation. It will be an additional happiness to me, to owe my liberty to you."

Pursuant to the orders of Mezomorto, the Toledan repaired to him to give him an account of his embassy. "Sir," said he to him, "you will not be compelled to have recourse to violence for the gratification of your desires. It appears to me, that this haughty Spaniard will soon, like others, be reconciled to her situation. I may even say, that her fetters have already begun to press lightly upon her. All that is necessary is, that you should cultivate this favourable temper. If you continue to demonstrate the same affectionate respect for your beautiful captive, I have no doubt that in a short time she will yield to your wishes, and forget in your arms the liberty she once desired."

"You delight me with this intelligence," cried the Dey; "but are you not deceiving me, or are you not yourself mistaken? I will see her immediately, and learn whether her eyes confirm the flattering indications which you have remarked." He went accordingly to visit Donna Rosaura; and the Toledan returned to the garden, where he found the gardener, whom he had mentioned to her as the slave whose services might prove effectual in restoring her to liberty. The name of this man was Francisco.

He was well acquainted with Algiers, having served several masters before he passed into the hands of the Dey. "Francisco, my friend," said Don Juan, "you see me greatly afflicted. I find there is in the palace a Valencian lady of the first quality. She has requested Mezomorto to name himself the amount of her ransom but he is enamoured of her, and will not allow her to be set at liberty."

"And why should that give you so much concern?" replied Francisco. "Because we are natives of the same city," answered Don Juan; "her parents and mine are intimate friends, and there is nothing I would not do to contribute to her escape." "That would be no easy matter," observed Francisco, "but I would venture to say I could accomplish it, if the relations of the lady were disposed to reward the service well." "There is no doubt of that," replied Don Juan; "I will answer for their gratitude, and, above all, for her own. She is named Rosaura, and is the widow of a gentleman who has left her great wealth, nor is she less generous than rich. In one word, I am a Spaniard and a nobleman, and my assurance ought to satisfy you."

"Well," said the gardener, "on the strength of your promise I will go in search of a renegade, and propose it to him." "How!" interrupted the Toledan with surprise, "Do you mean to confide in a wretch who was not ashamed to renounce his faith?" "Renegade as he is," interrupted Francisco in his turn, "he is not the less a worthy man. He appears to me to be rather an object of pity than of hatred, and I should say he was excusable, if any circumstances could excuse such a crime. His story is short.

"He is a native of Barcelona, and a surgeon by profession. When he found that he did not succeed as he could have wished at Barcelona, he determined to remove to Cartagena, in the hope that a change of residence might induce an alteration in his fortunes. He embarked therefore for Cartagena with his mother, but they fell in with an Algerian pirate, who took them and brought them to this town. They were both sold — the mother to a Moor, and himself to a Turk; from whom he experienced such barbarity, that he embraced the Mahometan faith, in order at once to put an end to his own sufferings, and to procure the release of his mother, who, as he knew, was treated with great severity by the Moor, her master. He then entered into the service of the Dey, and made several voyages, by which he acquired some wealth. Part of this he applied to the ransom of his mother, and the rest he proposed to turn to account, by trying his fortune on the sea. He became captain of a vessel, and with some soldiers who agreed to attach themselves to him, he began to cruise between Alicante and Cartagena. He returned loaded with booty, and his subsequent enterprises succeeded so well, that he was enabled at length to arm a large ship, and make considerable prizes. But his good fortune at last deserted him. He attacked a French frigate, which gave him so rude a reception, that he was hardly able to regain the port of Algiers. In this place the

merit of pirates is determined by the degree of their success, and the renegade, after this reverse, fell into universal contempt. This disgusted him. He sold his ship, and retired to a house in the suburbs, where he has since resided, living on the remains of his property, with his mother and a few slaves.

"I frequently call upon him, for we are good friends, and he discloses to me his inmost thoughts. A few days since he told me, with tears in his eyes, that he had had no peace since he renounced his faith; and that he felt strongly inclined to trample upon the turban, at the risk of being burned alive, that, by a public exhibition of his repentence, he might make some amends for the crime he had committed.

"This is the character of the renegade," continued Francisco, "to whom I am about to apply, and I think we have nothing to fear from a man of this description. Under the pretext of going to the baths, I will now proceed to his house, and represent to him, that, instead of nourishing feelings of useless regret for having abandoned the church, he should consider how he may restore himself to her bosom. I shall then suggest that he might equip a vessel, as if he was weary of an inactive life, and wished to rove the sea again; and that by this conveyance we may reach the coast of Valencia, where Donna Rosaura will enable him to pass the rest of his days in peace."

Don Juan was enraptured with the prospect which the scheme of Francisco developed to him. "Yes, yes," he exclaimed, "my dear friend, you may promise everything to the renegade. Depend upon it, you shall both be rewarded beyond your expectations." "There may be difficulties," replied Francisco, "in executing our project, but I augur well of our success, and I hope on my return to bring you happy news."

He then proceeded on his mission, and was expected with much impatience by the Toledan, to whom he soon communicated the result of his interview. It was agreed that the renegade should purchase a small vessel, completely equipped, which he should man with his own slaves; that to obviate suspicion, he should engage some Turkish soldiers, as if he actually meditated a cruise, but that two days before the time fixed for their departure, he should embark with his slaves at night, weigh anchor silently, and take up the fugitives at a little gate of the garden opening on the sea.

How great was Zarata's joy to be able to convey such encouraging assurances to Donna Rosaura! He hastened to obtain permission to see her, and with this view on the following day prostrated himself before Mezomorto, and found him charmed with the advances he had apparently made in his captive's good opinion. Don Juan professed to be greatly pleased with this result; and to improve the favourable impression already made, was again allowed to converse with the lady, whom he was thus enabled to apprise of the projected attempt of the renegade and Francisco, and of the promises he had held out to them, if they conducted it to a prosperous issue.

Great was the delight of the afflicted lady, when she was informed that such measures were concerted for her deliverance. "Is it possible," she exclaimed in the excess of her joy, "that there is a shadow of hope that I may once more see Valencia, my own dear native land! What happiness, after so many dangers and alarms, to live there in peace with you. Ah, Don Juan, how sweet is that thought to my mind; but do you participate in its pleasures? Do you consider, that in rescuing me from the power of the Dey, it is your own wife whom you save?"

"Alas," replied Zarata, heaving a profound sigh, "with what rapture should I hear such words from your mouth, if the remembrance of my unhappy friend did not interfere to poison all my pleasure. This is a sentiment which you cannot but forgive, nor can you deny that Mendoza is deserving of your pity. For your sake he quitted Valencia, and lost his liberty; and I am convinced that, enslaved as he is at Tunis, he suffers less from his chains than from the reflection that he has failed to avenge you."

"He deserved no doubt a better fate," said Donna Rosaura. "I call heaven to witness that I am grateful for all that he has done for me; I greatly regret the misfortunes into which I have innocently led him, but I shall never be able to prevail on my heart to reward him with its affections."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the slaves, who waited on Donna Rosaura, and Don Juan took his leave. Nothing occurred to interfere with the plan of the renegade, who bought a small vessel, tolerably well equipped, and hastened the preparations for his departure. In the meantime, Don Juan had again seen the fair captive and apprised her of the time when the ship would be ready. A window of her apartment opened on the garden, and from this it was arranged that the lady should descend, with the help of a ladder, which the confederates were to bring. Eager was the impatience with which she awaited the important night. At length it came, and by good fortune proved to be dark and gloomy. At the appointed moment, Don Juan placed the ladder under the window, from which the lady descended with much hurry and agitation, but in safety. Leaning on the arm of her courageous friend, they turned their steps towards the little door of the garden, which opened on the sea. They proceeded with as much speed as possible, and were already anticipating the pleasure of finding themselves at liberty, when fortune, still hostile to these unfortunate lovers, overwhelmed them with a misfortune, more difficult to be guarded against, and more painful to endure, than the worst of those which had hitherto afflicted them.

They had already left the garden, and were hastening along the shore towards the boat, which was waiting for them, when a man, whom they supposed to be one of the companions of their flight, and of whom they had no distrust, rushed on Don Juan, with his sword in his hand, and

plunging it in his bosom, exclaimed, "Perfidious Alvaro Ponce, it is thus that Don Fabrique de Mendoza ought to take his revenge on a dastardly ravisher. A wretch like thee deserves not a fair encounter." The Toledàn, yielding to the force of the unexpected blow, fell to the ground, and at the same moment, Donna Rosaura, whom he had supported, overcome at once with astonishment, fear, and grief, fainted at his side. "Ah, Mendoza," exclaimed Don Juan, "what have you done? Do you not know me? You have killed your friend. But I die content, since I can now restore to your arms your beloved Donna Rosaura, who can bear witness for me, that my attachment to you has never abated." "Gracious powers!" cried Don Fabrique, "is it possible I have destroyed my friend? But he shall not die alone; the same weapon shall punish his murderer. My ignorance may be some excuse for my crime, but cannot reconcile me to life." With these words, he turned the point of his sword against his own bosom, drove it to the hilt, and fell on the body of Don Juan, who had fainted away, not more from loss of blood, than from horror at the sight of his friend's desperation.

Francisco and the renegade, who were waiting at a little distance, and who had their private reasons for not advancing to the succor of the supposed Don Alvaro, were much astonished at hearing the last words of Don Fabrique; and observing the action which accompanied them, they perceived that there had been some misunderstanding, and that the wounded cavaliers were affectionate friends, and not sworn enemies, as they had believed. They then hastened to their assistance, but finding them all without sense or motion, they were at a loss what course to pursue. Francisco was of opinion, that they should carry off the lady, and leave the cavaliers on the shore, where, to all appearance, they must soon expire, if they were not already dead. But this was opposed by the renegade, who would not consent to abandon the wounded, whose injuries might not prove mortal; and it was resolved that they should be carried to the vessel, where the renegade, who had not forgotten his old profession, and still possessed his instruments, undertook to dress their wounds. In a few minutes they had all embarked; and while some got the vessel under sail, and spread all their canvas, the others, with fervent prayers, implored the favour of heaven on their adventure, with all the earnestness which could be inspired by the liveliest apprehension of being pursued by the galleys of Mezomorto.

After having committed the management of the vessel to a French slave, in whose skill and experience he could confide, the renegade directed his attention in the first instance to Donna Rosaura. He succeeded in restoring her to her senses; and his remedies had so favourable an effect on Don Fabrique and the Toledan, that they also soon revived. Donna Rosaura, who had fainted on seeing the blow which Don Juan received, was much surprised to see Mendoza in the vessel; she easily conjectured,

on seeing his condition, that he had wounded himself in a fit of remorse for the injury he had inflicted on his friend, but even this circumstance could not induce her to look upon him in any other light, than as the assassin of the man she adored.

After some time spent in silence, equally sorrowful and affecting, Don Fabrique, in a feeble tone, addressed the object of all his desires. "Before I die, Madam," said he, "I have at least the satisfaction of seeing you released from slavery. Would to heaven that you had been indebted to me for your liberty; but it has pleased Providence that the lover whom you prefer should lay you under that obligation. I love my rival too much to complain of this, and I earnestly hope that the wound which I have been so unfortunate as to give him, will not prevent him from receiving the reward he has a right to expect from your gratitude." To this address the lady made no reply; far from showing any concern for the deplorable fate of Don Fabrique, she could not disguise the feelings of displeasure excited by the state to which he had reduced her beloved Don Juan.

The surgeon now proceeded to probe and dress the wounds of the two friends. He found that Zarata was not dangerously hurt, the weapon having only glided under the left breast, without injuring any vital part. This report of the surgeon diminished the sorrow of Donna Rosaura, and was received by Don Fabrique with the greatest pleasure. He turned towards the lady,—"I am content," said he, "I leave the world without regret, since my friend's recovery is certain; I shall not now die loaded with your hatred."

He pronounced these words with so touching a tone, that Donna Rosaura was moved. Her enmity to Don Fabrique disappeared with her fears for Don Juan, and seeing only in the former a man who merited all her sympathy, she entreated him to think only of restoring himself to health, assuring him that if she could not render him happy, she would at least not confer her hand on another, but would imitate Don Juan in the sacrifice which he made of his love to his friendship. Don Fabrique would have replied, but the surgeon, apprehensive that the effort might injure him, enjoined silence, and examined his wound; this he conceived to be mortal, the sword having pierced the upper lobe of the lungs, which was sufficiently evident from the alarming loss of blood. As soon as he had applied the first dressings, he left the two patients to repose in the cabin on two beds placed side by side, and he removed Donna Rosaura, whose presence might prove injurious to them.

In spite of these precautions, Mendoza was seized with fever, and about the close of day the hemorrhage increased. The surgeon then thought it proper to inform him, that the evil was beyond remedy, and that if he had anything to say to his friend or to the lady, he had no time to lose. This intimation was received by the Toledan with great

agitation; by Don Fabrique himself with indifference. He expressed a wish to see Donna Rosaura, who repaired to his bedside in a state more easy to conceive than describe; her face was bathed in tears, and her sobs excited deep emotion in the breast of the unhappy Mendoza. "Shed not those precious tears for me, Madam," he feebly said, "pray be composed, and listen to me; I entreat the same of you, my dear friend. I know this separation is a severe blow to you, for your friendship has stood the severest test; yet delay a little, till I leave you, to honour my memory with so many touching marks of your tenderness and compassion. Indeed I feel it more keenly than the loss of life itself. Hear by what strange accidents fate brought me to this fatal shore, now stained with the blood of my friend and with my own. You will naturally inquire how I came to mistake Don Juan for Don Alvaro: and this, if time be permitted, I will explain before my death. A few hours after the vessel, in which I was, had left that in which Don Juan sailed, we met a French corsair, which attacked us. It made itself master of the Tunis vessel, and landed us near to Alicante. No sooner was I free, than I bethought myself of ransoming my friend. For this purpose I repaired to Valencia, where I got the money, and hearing that at Barcelona the holy fraternity for redeeming captives was on the point of setting sail for Algiers, I hastened thither. Before leaving Valencia, however, I entreated the Governor, Don Francisco de Mendoza, my uncle, to employ his influence with the court of Spain to obtain the pardon of Zarata, whom I intended to take with me and reinstate in the enjoyment of his property, which had been confiscated since the death of the Duke de Naxera.

"On arriving at Algiers I repaired to the slave-mart; but in vain there, and everywhere, did I seek the object of whom I was in search. I met, indeed, the Catalonian renegade, to whom this vessel belongs; and I recognized him as a servant who had formerly lived with my uncle. I informed him of my purpose, and requested that he would unite with me in making the strictest search. 'I am sorry,' he replied, 'that I can be of no use to you. I am going to leave Algiers this night with a Valencian lady, the slave of the Dey.'

"'And what is her name?' I inquired. 'She goes by the name of Rosaura,' was the answer.

"The astonishment evinced in my countenance convinced the renegade, that I was deeply interested in the matter. He then told me of a design he had formed to free her from captivity; and as he alluded to the slave Alvaro, I had no doubt but it was Alvaro Ponce himself. 'Aid me to accomplish an act of vengeance,' I cried with vehemence; 'it is rightful and just.'

"'You shall soon be satisfied,' replied the renegade; 'but inform me of your cause of complaint.'

"I explained it fully, and when he had heard it, 'It is enough,' he

said; 'come with me to-night, I will point out your rival, and when you have punished him, you shall take his place, and escort Donna Rosaura along with us to Valencia.'

"My impatience, nevertheless, did not make me unmindful of Don Juan: I left money for his ransom in the hands of an Italian merchant, named Francesco Capati, a resident at Algiers, who promised to fulfil my wishes. Night at last came; I went to the house of the renegade, who guided me to the sea-shore. We stopped before a little gate, from which there issued a man, who came directly towards us, and pointing to another man and woman who followed him, he said: 'Here are Alvaro and Donna Rosaura.' At this sight I grew altogether frantic; I drew my sword, I ran towards the unhappy Alvaro, in the idea that it was a hateful rival whom I saw. But, thanks to heaven," he continued, "my error will not affect his life, nor prove an unceasing source of tears and regret to the excellent Rosaura."

"Ah! Mendoza," interrupted the lady, "you do not appreciate my affliction; I shall never recover the sad event of losing you; even should I espouse your friend, it would but be to unite our grief and regrets together. Your love, your friendship, your misfortunes, would be the sole topic of our discourse."

"It is more than I merit that you should so long regret me; it is my wish that my friend should espouse you, when he shall have avenged your wrongs."

"Don Alvaro lives no more!" exclaimed the widow of Cifuentes; "he was killed on the very day when he carried me off, by the corsair who captured me."

"Lovely Rosaura," replied Mendoza, "these tidings give me much pleasure; my friend will the sooner be happy for them. Indulge your mutual attachment. I am glad to think the sole remaining obstacle to your wishes is about to be removed. May all your days run in a pleasing and quiet tenor, blest in a union which neither jealousy nor fortune can disturb. Farewell, Rosaura; and farewell, my Juan; do not forget sometimes to think of me — of one who has never loved anything on earth with the devotion that he loved you!"

While the gentle lady and the knight of Toledo mingled their tears at these touching words, Don Fabrique, who saw their grief, as he felt fast sinking into death, faintly whispered: "I must, by my own, add to your natural and kind expression of grief; death is on me, — I have nothing but to supplicate the Divine mercy for cutting short a life that heaven only had the right to dispose of." Saying these words, he raised his eyes to heaven, and in a few moments all was over.

Don Juan was no sooner aware of the fact, than in utter despair he tried to tear open his wound; but the renegade and Francisco were near, and prevented him. Rosaura, terrified at his violence, united her

efforts to theirs to mitigate his anguish. She did this in so affecting a manner, that he could not resist the appeal; he let them re-dress his wound; and at length the feelings of the lover began to throw a calm over those of the friend. Yet, with the return of reason, his sorrow was not less poignant; it resembled only the calmness of despair.

The renegade, among other precious articles which he was bearing with him to Spain, had some fine balm and perfume, with which, at the solicitation of the lady and Don Juan, he preserved the body of Mendoza, that they might have the sad pleasure of bestowing on it the honour of sepulture in his own country. The lovers ceased not to lament his fate during the whole of the voyage; but as the wind continued constantly favourable, they were not long before they descried the shores of Spain.

At that sight, all the captives gave vent to the most passionate exclamations of joy; on the vessel entering the port each pursued his particular destination. The widow of Cifuentes, and her lover, sent off letters for the governor and family of Donna Rosaura. Tidings of her return were received by them with joy; and as for Don Francisco de Mendoza, he showed the greatest affliction on hearing of his nephew's death. He shed tears abundantly over the body; every spectator was affected at the scene; and he soon after, turning towards them, inquired by what fearful accident he had met his early fate?

"I will inform you of all," returned the knight of Toledo; "far from wishing to banish it from my memory, I take a sad pleasure in the indulgence of my grief." He then began a recital, which drew tears from every eye; while, on the other hand, the parents of Rosaura congratulated themselves on the almost miraculous manner in which she had been rescued from the tyranny of Mezomorto.

After a general explanation on all points, the body of Don Fabrique was placed in a coach, and conducted to Valencia; but it was not there interred, on account of the viceroyship of Don Francisco being on the eve of expiration. That cavalier, therefore, had it transported to Madrid, to which city he was himself bending his course.

Meanwhile, the widow of Cifuentes lavished the richest presents on Don Francisco and the renegade. The Navarrese returned to his province, and the renegade went with his mother to Barcelona, where he was restored to the true faith, and where he lives in comparative comfort till this day. Don Francisco received a packet from the court, which contained the pardon for Don Juan, which the king was unable to refuse to the united influence of the Mendoza family, spite of the opposition of the house of Naxera. These tidings were the more agreeable to the knight of Toledo, as giving him liberty to accompany the body of his friend, which he could not have otherwise done.

At length the procession set out, with a suite of illustrious personages;

and, on reaching Madrid, the body was interred with every mark of honor, and a grand monument raised to their friend's memory in the church. They did not content themselves with this; they bore deep mourning for him they had lost during the space of a year, as if desirous, with his memory, to perpetuate their sorrow and their friendship.

Having thus shown their respect to him by every mark of attachment in their power, they gave their hearts and hands to each other; but it was long ere Don Juan ceased to cherish the remembrance of his friend with feelings of overpowering melancholy. He often appeared to him in his dreams; and still more often he again witnessed him breathing his last sighs. Yet at length the irresistible tenderness, combined with the many charms possessed by Rosaura, had begun to dissipate his morbid and suffering state of mind. He was just beginning to feel restored to his former health and happiness; a cheerful future seemed to open before him; when one day, in following the chase, to which he was exceedingly attached, he had the misfortune to be severely injured on the head. An abscess formed, to remove which the efforts of art were employed in vain. He died; and that lady whom you behold in the arms of the two females, who attempt to soothe the anguish of her despair, is his unfortunate consort, Rosaura; and, from all appearances, it may not be long before she will rejoin him.

EDUARDO ZAMACOIS

(1878-)

THE following is taken from the introductory note of the English translation of two of Zamacois' stories:

"'I have no biography . . . Oh, yes, I was born, I suppose. We all are. My birth took place in Cuba, in 1878. When I was three, my parents took me to Brussels. I grew up there, and in Spain and Paris. My education — the beginning of it — was given me in Paris and at the University of Madrid. Degree? Well — a *Philosophe ès Lettres*. I much prefer the title of Philosopher of Humanity.'"

Zamacois is one of the most energetic and talented of the younger Spaniards: Socialist, editor, dramatist, novelist and story writer, he has taken an honorable and distinguished part in that revival of Spanish art and literature which is still in process of development.

The story that follows is translated by George Allan England, in the volume *Their Son and The Necklace*, Boni & Liveright, New York, 1919. Copyright, 1919, by Boni & Liveright, Inc., by whose permission it is here reprinted.

THEIR SON

I

AT ABOUT the age of thirty, tired of living all alone with no one to love, Amadeo Zureda got married. This Zureda was a stocky fellow, neither tall nor short, dark, thoughtful, and with a certain slow, sure way of moving. The whole essence of his face, the soul of it — to speak so — was rooted in the taciturn energy of the space between his eyebrows. There you found the man, more than in the rough black mustache which cut across his face; even more than in the thickness of his cheekbones, the squareness of his jaws, the hard solidity of his nose. His brow was somber as an evil memory.

One after the other you might erase all the lines of that face, and so long as you left the thick-tufted brows, you would not have changed the expression of Amadeo Zureda. For there dwelt the whole spirit of the man, reserved yet ardent.

His marriage rescued Rafaela, whom he made his wife, from the slavish toil of a workwoman. Rafaela was just over eighteen, a buxom brunette with big, roguish, black eyes. Her breath was sweet, her lips vivid, her mobile hips full and inviting, like her breasts; and she had a free-and-easy,

energetic, enterprising way of walking. Joined to a kind of untamed grace (just a bit vulgar, in the manner of a daughter of the people), she possessed a certain distinction both of face and manner, of moving, of showing likes and dislikes, that enhanced and exalted her beauty. Her hands were small and well cared for. She liked fine shoes and starched petticoats that frou-froued as she walked.

Her mind resembled her body. It was restless, lively and incapable of keeping the same point of view for very long. When she talked, those coquettish eyes of hers shone brighter than ever, with enjoyment. Her mouth was rather large; her teeth dazzling; and the light of laughter always shone there like an altar-lamp.

Amadeo worshiped her. When he came home at night from work, Rafaela ran to meet him with noisy jubilation and then cuddled herself caressingly on his knees, after he had sat down. All this filled Zureda with ineffable joy, so that he became quite speechless, in ecstasy. At such times even the thoughtful scar of the wrinkle between his brows grew less severe, in the calm gravity of his dark forehead.

The newly married couple took lodgings on the sixth floor of a house not far from the Estación del Norte. The house was new, and their apartment was full of sun and cheer, with big, well-lighted rooms. They had a couple of balconies, too; and these the busy, artistic hands of Rafaela kept smothered in flowers.

Amadeo was a locomotive-engineer. The company liked him well and more than well. During the two years he had been on the Madrid-Bilbao run he had never been called in for reprimand. He was intelligent and a hard worker. Fifteen hours he could stand up to the job, and still see just as clearly as ever with those black, powerful eyes of his. In his corduroys, this muscular, dark-skinned, impassive man reminded you of a bronze.

He was devoted to his job. He had learned engineering in the States, which everybody knows is a master-country for railroading. His parents had both died when he was very young. He had dedicated the whole plenitude of his affections, his sap and vigor as a single man, to his work. Foot by foot he knew the right-of-way from Madrid to Bilbao in its most intimate details, so that he could have made that run blindfolded, just as safely as if he had been walking about his own house. There were clumps of trees, ravines, rivers, hills and farms that, to his eyes, had the decisive meaning of a watch or a map.

"At such-and-such a place," he would think, "I've got to jam the brakes on; there's a downgrade just beyond." Or else: "Here's the bridge. It must be so-and-so o'clock." His grip on such ideas of time and space was always exactly right. He seemed infallible. Zureda knew that all these inanimate objects, scattered along the line, were so many faithful friends incapable of deceiving him.

He shared this fetichistic love of the landscape with the love inspired in

him by his engines. Ordinarily he ran two: No. 187 and No. 1,082. He called the first "Nigger," and the second "Sweetie." Nigger was an intractable brute, ill-tempered and hard-bitted. When she tackled a hill she seemed to quiver with pain, and in her iron belly strange threatening shrieks resounded. She skidded downhill and was hard to get under control. You would have said some wayward spirit was thrashing about inside her, eternally rebelling against all government. She was logy, at times, and hated to start; but once you got her going you had a proper job to stop her. When she rushed in under the black arch of a tunnel, her whistle shrieked with ear-splitting alarum, like a man screeching.

"Sweetie" was a different sort, meek, obedient, strong and good-willed on an up-grade, cautious and full of reserve on a down, when the headlong flight of the train had to be checked.

Twice a week, each time that Amadeo started on a run, his wife always asked him:

"Which machine have you got, to-day?"

If it was "Sweetie," she had nothing to worry about.

"That's all right," she would say. "But the other one! I certainly am afraid of it. It's bad luck, sure!"

Zureda, however, liked to handle both of them. Sometimes he preferred one, sometimes the other, according to the state of his nerves. When his mood was cheerful, he liked "Sweetie" best, because there wasn't much work about running her. He preferred her, usually, on quiet days, when the sun was giving the earth a big, warm kiss. Zureda's fireman was a chap named Pedro; an Andalusian, full of spicy songs and tales. Amadeo rather liked to hear these, always keeping his eyes fixed on blue distances that seemed to smile at him. Out ahead, over the boiler, the rails stretched on and on, shining like silver in the sun. The warm air blew about Zureda, laden with sweet country smells. Under his feet the engineer felt the shuddering of "Sweetie," tame, laborious, neither bucking nor snorting; and at such times, both proud and caressing as if he loved her, he would murmur:

"Get along with you, my pretty lamb!"

At other times the engineer's full-blooded vigor suffered vague irritations and capricious rages, unwholesome disturbances of temper which made him unwilling to talk, and dug still deeper the grim line between his brows. Then it was that he preferred to take out "Nigger." Stubborn, menacing, rebellious against all his demands, the fight she gave him — a fight always potentially dangerous — acted as a sedative to his nerves and seemed to pacify him. At such times Pedro, the Andalusian with the risqué stories and the spicy songs, felt the numbing, evil humor of his engineer, and grew still.

All along the line, chiming into the uproarious quiverings of the engine and the whistling gusts of wind, a long colloquy of hate seemed to develop between the man and the machine. Zureda would grit his teeth and grunt:

"Go on, you dog! Some hill — but you've got to make it! Come on, get to it!"

Then he would fling open the furnace door, burning red as any Hell-pit, and with his own furious hand would fling eight or ten shovels of coal into the firebox. The machine would shudder, as if lashed by punishment. Enraged snorts would fill her; and from her smoking shoulders something like a wave of hate seemed to stream back.

Zureda always came home from trips like these bringing some present or other for his wife; perhaps a pair of corsets, a fur collar, a box of stockings. The wife, knowing just the time when the express would get in, always went out on the balcony to see it pass. Her husband never failed to let her know he was coming, from afar, by blowing a long whistle-blast.

If she were still abed when the train arrived, she would jump up, fling on a few clothes and run to the balcony. Her joyous face would smile out at the world from the green peepholes through the plants in their flowerpots. In a moment or two she could see the train among the wooded masses of Moncloa. On it came with a roar and a rattle, hurling its undulating black body along the polished rails. Joyously the engineer waved his handkerchief at her, from the engine-cab; and only at times like these did his brow — to which no smile ever lent complete contentment — smooth itself out a little and seem almost happy.

Amadeo Zureda desired nothing. His work was hard, but all he needed to make him glad was just the time between runs — two nights a week — that he spent in Madrid. His whole brusque but honest soul took on fresh youth there, under the roof of his peaceful home, surrounded by the simple pieces of furniture that had been bought one at a time. This was all the reward he wanted. The cold that pierced his bones, out there in the storms along the railway-line, gradually changed to a glow of warmth in the caressing arms of his wife. Body and soul both fell asleep there in the comfort of a happy and sensual well-being.

II

It hardly takes more than a couple of years of married life to age a docile man; or at least — about the same thing — to fill him with those forward-looking ideas of caution, economy and peace that sow the seed of fear for the morrow, in quiet souls.

One time Zureda was laid up a while with a bad cold. Getting better of this, the engineer on a momentous night spoke seriously to his wife concerning their future. His bronzed face lying on the whiteness of the pillows brought out the salience of his cheek-bones and the strength of his profile. The vertical furrow between his brows seemed deeper than ever, cut into the serene gravity of his forehead. His wife listened to him attentively, sitting on the edge of the bed, with one leg crossed over the other. She cradled the upper knee between joined hands.

Slowly the engineer's talk unwound itself, to the effect that life is a poor thing at best, constantly surrounded by misfortunes that can strike in an infinitude of ways. To-day it's a cold draft, to-morrow a chill or a sore throat, or maybe a cancer, that death uses to steal our lives away. All about us, yawning like immense jaws, the earth is always opening, the earth into which all of us must some time descend; and in this very swift and savagely universal hecatomb no one can be sure of witnessing both the rising and the setting of the same day.

"I'm not afraid of work, you know," went on Zureda, "but engines are made of iron, and even so they wear out at last and get tired of running. Men are just the same. And when it happens to me, as it's got to, some day, what'll become of us, then?"

Calmly Rafaela shook her head. She by no means shared her husband's fears. No doubt Amadeo's sickness had made him timorous and pessimistic.

"I think you're making it worse than it really is," she answered. "Old age is still a long way off; and, besides, very likely we'll have children to help us."

Zureda's gesture was a negation.

"That don't matter," he replied. "Children may not come at all; and even if they do, what of that? As for old age being far off, you're wrong. Even to-day, do you think I've got the strength and quickness, or even the enjoyment in my work, that I had when I was twenty-five? Not on your life! Old age is certainly coming, and coming fast. So I tell you again we've got to save something.

"If we do, when I can no longer run an engine I'll open a little machine-shop; and if I should die suddenly, leaving you fifteen or twenty thousand *pesetas*, you could easily start a good laundry in some central location, for that's the kind of work you understand."

To all this Zureda added a number of other arguments, discreet and weighty, so that his wife declared herself convinced. The engineer already had a plan laid out, that made him talk this way. Among the people who had come to see him, while he had been sick, was one Manolo Berlanga, whose friendship with him had been brotherly indeed. This Berlanga had a job at a silversmith's shop in the Paseo de San Vincente. He had no relatives, and made rather decent wages. A good many times he had told Zureda how much he wanted to find some respectable house where he could live in a decent, private way, paying perhaps four or five pesetas a day for board and room.

"Suppose, now," went on Amadeo, "that Manolo should pay five pesetas a day; that's thirty *duros* a month — thirty good dollars — and the house costs us eight dollars. Well, that leaves us twenty-two dollars a month, and with that, and a few dollars that I'll put in, we can all live high."

To this Rafaela consented, rather stirred by the new ideas awakened by the innovation. The silversmith was a free-and-easy, agreeable young fellow, who chattered all the time and played the guitar in no mean fashion.

"Yes, but how about a place for him?" asked she. "Is there any? What room could we give him?"

"Why, the little alcove off the dining-room, of course."

"Yes, I was thinking of that, too. But it's mighty small, and there's no light in it."

The engineer shrugged his shoulders.

"It's good enough just to sleep in!" he exclaimed. "If we were dealing with a woman, that would be different. But we men get along any old way, all right."

Rafaela wrote to Berlanga next day, at her husband's request, telling him to come and see them. Promptly on the dot the silversmith arrived. He looked about twenty-eight, wore tightly-belted velveteen trousers gaitered under the shoe, and a dark overcoat with astrakhan collar and cuffs. He was of middle height, lean, pale-faced, with a restless manner, a fluent, witty way of talking. On some pretext or other the wife went out, leaving the two men to chew things over and come to an agreement.

"Now, as for living with you people," said Berlanga, "I'll be very glad to give five pesetas per. Or I'll better that, if you say so."

"No, no, thanks," answered Zureda. "I don't want to be bargaining with you. We can all help each other. You and I are like brothers, anyhow."

That night after supper, Rafaela dragged all the useless furniture out of the dining-room alcove and swept and scoured it clean. Next day she got up early to go to a hard-by pawnshop, where she bought her an iron bed with a spring and a woolen mattress. This bed she carefully set up, and fixed it all fine and soft. A couple of chairs, a washstand and a little table covered with a green baize spread completed the furnishing of the room.

After everything was ready, the young woman dressed and combed herself to receive the guest, who arrived about the middle of the afternoon with his luggage, to wit: a box with his workman's tools, a trunk and a little cask. This cask held a certain musty light wine, which — so Berlanga said, after coffee and one of Zureda's cigars had made him expansive — had been given him by a "lady friend" of his who ran a tavern.

A few days passed, days of unusual pleasure to the engineer and his wife, for the silversmith was a man of joyful moods and very fond of crooking his elbow, so that his naturally fertile conversation became hyperbolically colored and quite Andalusian in its exuberance. At dessert, the merry quips of Berlanga woke sonorous explosions of hilarity in Amadeo. When he laughed, the engineer would lean his massive shoulders against the back

of the chair. Now and again, as if to underscore his bursts of merriment, he would deal the table shrewd blows. After this he would slowly emit his opinions; and if he had to advise Berlanga, he did it in a kind of paternal way, patiently, good-naturedly.

When he was quite well again, Amadeo went back to work. The morning he took leave of his wife, she asked him:

"Which engine have you got, to-day?"

"Nigger," he answered.

"My, what bad luck! I'm afraid something's going to happen to you!"

"Rubbish! Why should it? *I* can handle her!"

He kissed Rafaela, tenderly pressing her against his big, strong breast. At this moment an unwholesome thought, grotesquely cruel, cut his mind like a whip; a thought that he would pass the night awake, out in the storm, in the engine-cab, while there in Madrid another man would be sleeping under the same roof with his wife. But this unworthy suspicion lasted hardly a second. The engineer realized that Berlanga, though a riotous, dissipated chap, was at heart a brotherly friend, far from base enough to betray him in any such horrible manner.

Rafaela went with her husband to the stairway. There they both began again to inflame each other with ardent kisses and embraces of farewell. The wife's black eyes filled with tears as she told him to keep himself well bundled up and to think often of her. Tears quite blinded her.

"What a good lass she is!" murmured Zureda.

And as he recalled the poisonous doubt of a moment before, the man's ingenuous nobility felt shame.

The life of Manolo Berlanga turned out to be pretty disreputable. He liked wine, women and song, and many a time came home in the wee small hours, completely paralyzed. This invariably happened during the absence of the engineer. Next morning he was always very remorseful, and went with contrition to the kitchen, where Rafaela was getting breakfast.

"Are you mad at me?" he used to ask.

She answered him in a maternal kind of way and told him to be good; this always made him laugh.

"None o' that!" he used to say. "I don't like being good. That's one of the many inflictions marriage forces on a man. Don't you have enough 'being good' in this house, with Amadeo?"

Among men, love is often nothing more than the carnal obsession produced in them by the constant and repeated sight of one and the same woman. Every laugh, every motion of the woman moving about them possesses a charm at first hardly noticed. But after a while, under the spell of a phenomenon we may call cumulative, this charm waxes potent; it grows till some time it unexpectedly breaks forth in an enveloping, conquering passion.

Now one morning it happened that Manolo Berlanga was eating breakfast in the dining-room before going to the shop. Rafaela, her back toward him, was scrubbing the floor of the hallway.

"How you do work, my lady!" cried the silversmith, jokingly.

Her answer was a gay-toned laugh; then she went on with her task, sometimes recoiling so that she almost sat on her heels, again stretching her body forward with an energy that lowered the tight-corseted slimness of her waist and set in motion the fullness of her yielding hips. The silversmith had often seen her thus, without having paid any heed; but hardly had he come to realize her sensual appeal when the flame of desire blazed up in him.

"There's a neat one for you!" thought he.

And he kept on looking at her, his vicious imagination dwelling on the perfections of that carnal flower, soft and vibrant. His brown study continued a while. Then suddenly, with the brusqueness of ill-temper, he got up.

"Well, so long!" said he.

He stopped in the stairway to greet a neighbor and light a cigarette. By the time he had reached the street-door he had forgotten all about Rafaela. But, later, his desire once more awoke. At dinner he dissimulated his observations of the young woman's bare arms. Strong and well-molded they were, those arms, and under the cloth of her sleeves rolled up above the elbow, the flesh swelled exuberantly.

"Hm! You haven't combed your hair, to-day," said Berlanga.

She answered with a laugh — one of those frankly voluptuous laughs that women with fine teeth enjoy.

"You're right," said she. "You certainly notice everything. I didn't have time."

"It don't matter," answered the gallant. "Pretty women always look best that way, with their hair flying and their arms bare."

"You mean that, really?"

"I certainly do!"

"Then you've got the temperament and makings of a married man."

"*I* have?"

"Sure!"

"How's that?"

She laughed again, gayly, coquettishly, adding:

"Because you already know that married women generally don't pay much attention to their husbands. That's what hurts marriage — women not caring how they look."

So they went on talking away, and all through their rather spicy conversation, full of meaning, a mutual attraction began to make itself felt. Silently this began sapping their will-power. At last the woman glanced at her clock on the sideboard.

"Eight o'clock," said she. "I wonder what Amadeo's doing, now?"

"Well, that's according," answered Berlanga. "When did he get to Bilbao?"

"This morning."

"Then he's probably been asleep part of the time, and now I guess he's playing dominoes in some café. And we, meantime — we're here — you and I —"

"And you don't feel very well, eh?" she asked.

"I?"

Looking at Rafaela with eloquent steadiness he slowly added:

"I feel a damn sight better than *he* does!"

Then, while he drank his coffee, the silversmith laid out on the table his board-money for that week. He began to count:

"Two and two's four — nine — eleven — thirty-eight pesetas. Rotten week I've had! Say, I've hardly pulled down enough for my drinks."

He got together seven dollars, piled them up — making a little column of silver change — and shoved them over to Rafaela.

"Here you go!" said he.

She blushed, as she answered. You would have thought her offended by the somewhat hostile opposition of debtor and creditor that the money seemed to have set up between them. She asked:

"What's all this you're giving me?"

"Say! What d'you suppose? Don't I pay every week? Well, then, here's my board. Seven days at five pesetas per, that's just thirty-five pesetas, huh? What's the matter with you?"

He made the coins jump and jingle in his agile hand, well-used to dealing cards. Then he added:

"To-day's Saturday. So then, I'll pay you now. That'll leave me three pesetas for extras — tobacco and car-fare. Oh, it's a fine time *I'll* have!"

With a lordly gesture, good-natured, protecting, the woman handed back Berlanga's money.

"Next week you can pay up," said she. "I'm fixed all right. By luck, even if I'm not five dollars to the good, I'm not five to the bad.

The silversmith offered the money again. But this time the offer was weak, and was made only in the half-hearted way that seemed necessary to keep him in good standing. Then he got up from the table, rubbed his hands up and down his legs to smooth the ugly bulge out of the knees of his trousers, pulled down his vest and readjusted the knot of his cravat before the mirror. He exclaimed with a kind of boastful swagger:

"D'you know what I'm thinking?"

"Tell me!"

"Oh, I don't dare."

"Why not?"

"You might get mad at me."

"No, no!"

"Promise you won't?"

"On my word of honor! Come on, now, say anything you like, and *I* won't mind."

"Well — how about — *him!*"

"I know what I'm doing!"

"Yes, but — see here! You don't care a hang for me, anyhow. You don't think very much of *me!*"

"I do, too! I think a lot!"

She looked at him in a gay, provocative manner, stirred to the depths of her by such a strong, overpowering caprice that it almost seemed love.

Expansively the silversmith answered:

"Well, then, since we've got money and we're all alone, why don't we take in a dance, to-night?"

The whole Junoesque body of the young woman — a true Madrid type — trembled with joy. It had been a long time since she had had any such amusement; not since her marriage had she danced. Zureda, something of a stick-in-the-mud and in no wise given to pleasures, had never wanted to take her to any dances, not even to a masquerade. A swarm of joyful visions filled her memory. Ah, those happy Sundays when she had been single! Saturday nights, at the shop, she and the other girls had made dates for the next day. Sometimes they had visited the dance-halls at Bombilla. Other times they had gone to Cuatro Caminos or Ventas del Espiritu Santo. And once there, what laughter and what joy! What strange emotions of half fear, half curiosity they had felt at sensing the desire of whatever man had asked them to dance!

Rafaela straightened up, quick, pliant, transfigured.

"You aren't any more willing to ask me, than I am to go!" said she.

"Well, why not, then?" demanded the silversmith. "Let's go, right now! Let's take a run out to Bombilla, and not leave as long as we've got a cent!"

The young woman fairly jumped for joy, skipped out of the dining-room, tied a silk handkerchief over her head and most fetchingly threw an embroidered shawl over her shoulders. She came back, immediately. Her little high-heeled, pointed, patent-leather boots and her fresh-starched, rustling petticoats echoed her impatience. She went up to Berlanga, took him familiarly by the arm, and said:

"I tell you, though, I'm going to pay half."

The silversmith shook his head in denial. She added, positively:

"That's the only way I'll go. Aren't we both going to have a good time? That's fair, for us both to pay half."

Berlanga accepted this friendly arrangement. As soon as they got into the street they hired a carriage. At Bombilla they had a first-rate supper and danced their heads off, till long past midnight. They went home

afoot, slowly, arm in arm. Rafaela had drunk a bit too much, and often had to stop. Dizzy, she leaned her head on the silversmith's breast. Manolo, himself a bit tipsy and out of control, devoured her with his eyes.

"Say, you're a peach!" he murmured.

"Am I, really?"

"Strike me blind if you're not! Pretty, eh? More than that! You're a wonder — oh, great! The best I ever saw, and I've seen a lot!"

She still had enough wit left to pretend not to hear him, playing she was ill. She stammered:

"Oh, I — I'm so sick!"

Suddenly Berlanga exclaimed:

"If Zureda and I weren't pals — "

Silence. The silversmith added, warming to the subject:

"Rafaela, tell me the truth. Isn't it true that Amadeo stands in our way?"

She peered closely at him, and afterward raised her handkerchief to her eyes. She gave him no other answer. And nothing more happened, just then.

During the monotonous passage of a few more days, Manolo Berlanga gradually realized that Rafaela had big, expressive eyes, small feet with high insteps and a most pleasant walk. He noted that her breasts were firm and full: and he even thought he could detect in her an extremely coquettish desire to appear attractive in his eyes. At the end of it all, the silversmith fully understood his own intentions, which caused him both joy and fear.

"She's got me going," he thought. "She's certainly got me going! Say, I'm crazy about that woman!"

At last, one evening, the ill-restrained passion of the man burst into an overwhelming torrent. On that very night, Zureda was going to come home. Hardly had Manolo Berlanga left the shop when he hurried to his lodgings. He had no more than reached the front room when — no longer able to restrain his evil thoughts — he asked:

"Has Amadeo got here, yet?"

"He'll be here in about fifteen minutes," answered Rafaela. "It's nine o'clock, now. The train's already in. I heard it whistle."

Berlanga entered the dining-room and saw that the young woman was making up his bed. He approached her.

"Want any help?" he asked.

"No, thanks!"

Suddenly, without knowing what he was about, he grabbed her round the waist. She tried to defend herself, turning away, pushing him from her. But, kissing her desperately, he murmured:

"Come now, quick, quick — before he gets here!"

Then, after a brief moment of silent struggle:
"Darling! Don't you see? It had to be this way — !"
The wife of Zureda did not, in fact, put up much of a fight.

A year later, Rafaela gave birth to a boy. Manolo Berlanga stood godfather for it. Both Rafaela and Amadeo agreed on naming it Manolo Amadeo Zureda. The baptism was very fine; they spent more than two thousand *reals* on it.

How pink-and-white, how joyous, how pretty was little Manolín! The engineer, congratulated by everybody, wept with joy.

III

LITTLE Manolo was nearly three years old. He had developed into a very cunning chap, talkative and pleasant. In his small, plump, white face, that looked even whiter by contrast with the dead black of his hair, you could see distinctive characteristics of several persons. His tip-tilted nose and the roguish line of his mouth were his mother's. From his father, no doubt, he had inherited the thoughtful forehead and the heavy set of his jaws. And at the same time you were reminded of his godfather by his lively ways and by a peculiar manner he had of throwing out his feet, when he walked. It seemed almost as if the clever little fellow had set his mind on looking like everybody who had stood near his baptismal font, so that he could win the love of them all.

Zureda worshiped the boy, laughed at all his tricks and graces, and spent hours playing with him on the tiles of the passageway. Little Manolo pulled his mustache and necktie, mauled him and broke the crystal of his watch. Far from getting angry, the engineer loved him all the more for it, as if his strong, rough heart were melting with adoration.

One evening Rafaela went down to the station to say good-by to her husband, who was taking out the 7.05 express. In her arms she carried the boy. Pedro, the fireman, looked out of the cab, and made both the mother and son laugh by pulling all sorts of funny faces.

"Here's the toothache face!" he announced. "And here's the stomach-ache-face!"

Then the bell rang, and they heard the vibrant whistle of the station-master.

"Here, give me the boy!" cried Zureda.

He wanted to kiss him good-by. The little fellow stretched out his tiny arms to his father.

"Take me! Take me, papa!" he entreated with a lisping tongue, his words full of love and charm.

Poor Zureda! The idea of leaving the boy, at that moment, stabbed him to the heart. He could not bear to let him go; he could not! Hardly know-

ing what he was about, he pressed the youngster to his breast with one hand, and with the other eased open the throttle. The train started. Rafaela, terrified, ran along the platform, screaming:

"Give him, give him to me!"

But already, even though Zureda had wanted to give him back, it was too late. Rafaela ran to the end of the platform, and there she had to stop. Pedro laughed and gesticulated from the blackness of the tender, bidding her farewell.

The young woman went back home, in tears. Manolo Berlanga had just got home. He had been drinking and was in the devil's own humor.

"Well, what's up now?" he demanded.

Inconsolable, sobbing, Rafaela told him what had happened.

"Is *that* all?" interrupted the silversmith. "Say, you're crazy! If he's gone, so much the better. Now he'll leave us in peace, a little while. Damn good thing if he *never* came back!"

Then he demanded supper.

"Come, now," he added, "cut out that sniveling! Give me something to eat. I'm in a hurry!"

Rafaela began to light the fire. But all the time she kept on crying and scolding. Her rage and grief dragged out into an interminable monologue:

"My darling — my baby — this is a great note! Think of that man taking him away, like that! The little angel will get his death o' cold. What a fool, what an idiot! And then they talk about the way women act! My precious! What'll I do, thinking about how cold he'll be, to-night? My baby, my heart's blood — my precious little sweetheart ——!"

In her anger she tipped over the bottle of olive-oil. It fell off the stove and smashed on the floor. The rage of the woman became frenzied.

"Damn my soul if I know *what* I'm doing!" she screeched. "Oh, that dirty husband of mine! I hope to God I never see him again. And now, how am I going to cook? I'll have to go down to the store. Say, I wish I'd never been born. We'd all be a lot better off! To Hell with such a ——"

"Say, are you going to keep that roughhouse up all night?" demanded the silversmith. Tired of hearing her noise, he had walked slowly into the kitchen. Now he stood there, black-faced, with his fists doubled up in the pockets of his jacket.

"I'll keep it up as long as I'm a mind to!" she retorted. "What are *you* going to do about it?"

"You shut your jaw," vociferated Berlanga, "or I'll break it for you!"

Then his rage burst out. Joining a bad act to an evil threat, he rained a volley of blows on the head of his mistress. Rafaela stopped crying, and through her gritted teeth spat out a flood of vile epithets.

"You dirty dog!" she cried. "You pimp! All you know how to do is hang around women. Coward! Sissy! The only part of a man you've got is your face!"

He growled:

"Take that, and that, you sow!"

The disgusting scene lasted a long time. Terrified, the woman stopped her noise, and fought. Soon her nose and mouth were streaming blood. In the kitchen resounded a confused tumult of blows and kicks, as the silversmith drove his victim into a corner and beat her up. After the sorry job was done, Berlanga cleared out and never came back till one or two in the morning. Then he went to his room and turned in without making a light, no doubt ashamed of his cowardly deed.

For a while he tried to excuse himself. After all, thought he, the whole blame wasn't his. Rafaela's tirade and the wine he himself had drunk, had been more than half at fault. Men, he reflected, certainly do become brutes when they drink.

The young woman was in her bedroom. From time to time, Berlanga heard her sigh deeply. Her sighs were long and tremulous, like those of a child still troubled in its dreams after having cried itself to sleep.

The silversmith exclaimed:

"Oh, Rafaela!"

He had to call her twice more. At last, in a kind of groan, the young woman answered:

"Well, what do you want?"

Slyly and proudly the silversmith grinned to himself. That question of hers practically amounted to forgiveness. The sweet moment of reconciliation was close at hand.

"Come here!" he ordered.

Another pause followed, during which the will of the man and of the woman seemed to meet and struggle, with strange magnetism, in the stillness of the dark house.

"Come, girl!" repeated the smith, softening his voice.

Then he added, after a moment:

"Well, don't you want to come?"

Another minute passed; for all women, even the simplest and most ignorant, know to perfection the magic secret of making a man wait for them. But after a little while, Berlanga heard Rafaela's bare feet paddling along the hall. The young woman reached the bedroom of the silversmith, and in the shadows her exploring hands met the hands that Manolo was stretching out to greet her.

"What do you want, anyhow?" she demanded, humble yet resentful.

"Come to bed!"

She obeyed. Many kisses sounded, given her by the smith. After a while the man's voice asked in an endearing yet overmastering way:

"Now, then, are you going to be good?"

Amadeo Zureda came back a couple of days later, eminently well

pleased. His boy had played the part of a regular little man during the whole run. He had never cried, but had eaten whatever they had given him and had slept like a top, on the coal. When Zureda kissed his wife, he noticed that she had a black-and-blue spot on her forehead.

"That looks like somebody had hit you," said he. "Have you been fighting with any one?"

She hesitated, then answered:

"No, no. Why, who'd I be fighting with? Much less coming to blows? The night you left, the oil-bottle fell off the sideboard, and when I went to pick it up I got this bump."

"How about that big scratch, there?"

"Which one? Oh, you mean on my lip? I did that with a pin."

"That's too bad! Take care of yourself, little lady!"

Manolo Berlanga was there and heard all this. He had to bite his mustache to hide a wicked laugh; but the engineer saw nothing at all. The poor man suspected nothing. He remained quite blind. Even if he had not loved Rafaela, his adoration of the boy would have been enough to fill his eyes with dust.

IV

TRUTH, however, is mighty and will prevail. After a while Zureda began to observe that something odd was going on about him. Slowly and without knowing why, he found a sort of distance separating him from his companions, who treated him and looked at him in a new way. You would almost have said they were trying to extort from his eyes the confession of some risqué secret he was doubtless keeping well covered up and hidden; a secret everybody knew. A complex sentiment of curiosity and silence isolated him from his friends and seemed to befog him with inexplicable ridicule. After a while he grew much puzzled by this phenomenon.

"I wonder if I've changed?" thought he. "Maybe I'm sick, without knowing it. Or can it be that I'm mighty ugly, and nobody dares to tell me so?"

Not far from the station, and near Manzanares Street, there was an eating-house where the porters, engineers and firemen were wont to foregather. This establishment belonged to Señor Tomás, who in his youth had been a toreador. The aplomb and force, as well as the stout-heartedness of that brave, gay profession still remained his. Señor Tomás talked very little, and for those who knew him well his words had the authority of print. He was a tall old fellow, with powerful hands and shoulders; he wore velveteen trousers and little Andalusian jackets of black stuff; and over the sash with which he masked his growing girth he strapped a wide leather belt with a silver buckle.

One evening Señor Tomás was enjoying the air at the door of his eating-

house when Zureda passed by. The tavern-keeper beckoned the engineer; and when Zureda had come near, looked fixedly into his eyes and said:

"You and I have got to have a few words."

Zureda remained dumb. The secret, chill vibration of an evil presentiment had passed like a cold wind through his heart. Presently recovering speech, he answered:

"Any time you say so."

They reëntered the tavern, which just then was almost without patrons. A high wooden shelf, painted red and covered with bottles, ran about the room. On the wall was hung the stuffed head of the bull that had given Señor Tomás the tremendous gash which had torn his leg open and had obliged him to lay aside forever the garb of a toreador. At the rear, the bartender had fallen asleep behind the polished bar, on which a little fountain of water was playing its perpetual music.

The two men sat down at a big table, and the tavern-keeper clapped his hands together.

"Hey you, there!" he cried.

The bartender woke up and came to him.

"What'll you have?" asked he.

"Bring some olives and two cups of wine."

A long pause followed. Señor Tomás with voracious pulls at his smoldering cigar set its tip glowing. A kind of gloomy preoccupation hardened his close-shaven face — a face that showed itself bronzed and fleshy beneath the white hair grandly combed and curled upon his forehead.

Presently he began:

"I hate to see two men fight, because if they're spirited it's bound to be serious. But still I can't bear to see a good man and a hard-working man be made a laughing-stock for everybody. Get me?"

Amadeo Zureda first grew pale and then red. Yes, he knew something was up. The old man had called him to tell him some terrible mystery. He felt that the strange feeling of vacancy all about him, which he had been sensing for some time, was at last going to be explained. He trembled. Something black, something vast was closing over his head; it might be one of those fearful tragedies that sometimes cut a human life in twain.

"I don't know how to talk, and I don't like to talk," went on the tavern-keeper. "That's why I don't beat round the bush, but I call a spade a spade. Yes, sir, I call things by their right names. Because in this world, Amadeo — you mark my words — everything's got a name."

"That's so, Señor Tomás."

"All right. And I'm one of those fellows that go right after the truth the way I used to go after the bull — go the quickest way, which is the best way, because it's the shortest."

"That's right, too."

"Well, then. I like you first-rate, Amadeo. I know you're a worker,

and I know you're one of those honest men that wouldn't stand for any crooked work to turn a dollar. And I know, too, you're a man that knows how to use his fists and how to run up the battle-flag of the soul, when you have to. I'm sure of all this. And by the same token, I won't let anybody make fun of you.

"Thanks, Señor Tomás."

"All right! Now, then, in my house, right here, people are saying your wife is thick with Manolo Berlanga!"

The eyes of the tavern-keeper and the engineer met. They remained fixed, so, a moment. Then the eyes of Zureda opened wide, seemed starting from their sockets. Suddenly he jumped up, and his square finger-nails fairly sank into the wood of the table. His white lips, slavering, stammered in a fit of rage:

"That's a lie, a damned lie, Señor Tomás! I'll cut your heart out for that! Yes, if the Virgin herself came down and told me that, I'd cut her heart out, too! God, what a lie!"

The tavern-keeper remained entirely self-possessed. Without even a change of expression he answered:

"All right! Find out what's true or false in this business. For you know there's no difference between the truth and a lie that everybody's telling. And if you decide there's nothing to this except what I say, come and tell me, for I'm right here and everywhere to back up my words!"

The tavern-keeper grew silent, and Amadeo Zureda remained motionless, struck senseless, gaping.

After a few minutes his ideas began to calm down again, and as they grew quiet they coördinated themselves; then the engineer felt an unwholesome and resistless curiosity to know everything, to torture himself digging out details.

"You mean to tell me," asked he, "that they've talked about that, right here?"

"Right on the spot, sir!"

"When?"

"More than once, and more than twenty times; and they say worse than that, too. They say Berlanga beats your wife, and you're wise to everything, and have been from the beginning. And they say you stand for it, to have a good thing, because this Berlanga fellow helps you pay the rent."

A couple of porters came in, and interrupted the conversation. Señor Tomás ended up with:

"Well now, you know all about it!"

When Zureda left the tavern, his first impulse was to go home and put it up to Rafaela. Either with soft words or with a stick he might get something about Berlanga out of her. But presently he changed his mind. Affairs of this kind can't be hurried much. It is better to go slow, to wait,

to get information bit by bit and all by one's self. When he reached the station it was six o'clock. He met Pedro on the platform.

"Which engine have we got to-day?" asked Amadeo.

"Nigger," answered the fireman.

"The devil! It just had to be her, eh?"

That run was terrible indeed, packed full of inward struggles and of battles with the rebellious locomotive — an infernal run that Zureda remembered all his life.

With due regard for the prudent scheme that he had mapped out, the engineer set himself to observing the way his wife and Manolo had of talking to each other. After greatly straining his attention, he could find nothing in the cordial frankness of their relations that seemed to pass the limits of good friendship. From the time when Berlanga had stood god-father for little Manolo, Amadeo had begged them to use "thee" and "thou" to each other, and this they had done. But this familiarity seemed quite brother-and-sisterly; it seemed justified by the three years they had been living in the same house, and could hardly be suspected of hiding any guilty secret.

None the less, the jealousy of Zureda kept on growing, rooting itself in every pretext, and using even the most minor thing to inflame and color with vampire suspicion every thought of the engineer. The notion kept growing in Zureda; it became an obsession which made him see the dreaded vision constantly, just as through another obsession, Berlanga's desire for Rafaela had been born.

At last Amadeo became convinced that his skill as a spy was very poor. He lacked that astuteness, those powers of deception and that divining instinct which, in a kind of second sight, makes some men get swiftly and directly at the bottom of things. In view of his blunt character, unfitted for any kind of diplomatic craft, he thought it better to confront the matter face to face.

As soon as he had come by this resolution, his uneasiness grew calm. A sedative feeling of peace took possession of his heart. The engineer passed that day quietly reading, waiting for night to come. Rafaela was sewing in the dining-room, with little Manolo asleep on her lap. Half an hour before supper, Zureda tiptoed to their bedroom and took from the little night-table his heavy-bladed, horn-handled hunting knife — the knife he always carried on his runs. After that he put on a flat cap tied a muffler round his neck — for the evening was cold — and started to leave the house. In the emptiness of the hallway his heavy, determined footfalls, echoing, seemed to waken something deadly.

A bit surprised, Rafaela asked:

"Aren't you going to eat supper here?"

"Yes," he answered, "but I'm just going out to stretch my legs a little. I'll be right back."

He kissed his wife and the boy, mentally taking a long farewell of them, and went out.

In Señor Tomás' tavern he found Manolo Berlanga playing *tute* with several friends. The silversmith was drunk, and his arrogant, defiant voice dominated the others. Slowly, with a careless and taciturn air, the engineer approached the group.

"Good evening, all," said he.

At first, no one answered him, for everybody's attention was fixed on the wayward come-and-go of the cards. When the game was done, one of the players exclaimed:

"Hello there, Amadeo! I didn't see *you!* But I saw your wife and kid yesterday. Some boy! And that's a pretty woman you've got, too. I don't say that just because you're here. It's true. Anybody can see you make all kinds of money, and spend it all on your wife!"

"Yes, and if he didn't," put in Berlanga, offering Zureda a glass of wine, "there'd be plenty more who would. How about that, Amadeo?"

Zureda remained impassive. He gulped the wine at one swallow. Then he ordered a bottle for all hands.

"Come on, now, I'll go you a game of *mus,*" he challenged Berlanga. "Antolín, here, will be my partner."

The silversmith accepted.

"Go to it!" said he.

The players all sat down around the table, and the game began.

"I'll open up."

"Pass."

"I'll stay in."

"I'm out."

"I'll stick."

"I'll raise that!"

"I renig!"

Now and then the players stopped for a drink, and a few daring bets brought out bursts of laughter.

"Whose deal, now?"

"Mine!"

All at once Amadeo, who was looking for some excuse to get into a row with the silversmith, cheated openly and took the pot. Manolo saw him cheat. Incensed, he threw his cards on the floor.

"Here now, that don't go!" he cried. "I don't care if we *are* friends, you can't get away with *that!*"

All the other players, angered, backed up the silversmith.

"No, sir! No, that don't go, here!" They echoed.

Very quietly the engineer demanded:

"Well, what have *I* done?"

"You threw away this card, the five o' clubs," replied Berlanga, "and slipped yourself a king, that you needed! That's all. You're cheating!"

The engineer answered the furious insult of the silversmith with a blow in the face. They tackled each other like a couple of cats. Chairs and table rolled on the floor. Señor Tomás came running, and he and the other players succeeded in separating them. A crowd, attracted by the noise of the fight gathered like magic. The tumult of these curiosity-seekers helped Amadeo hide his words as he and Manolo left the tavern. He said in his companion's ear:

"I'll be waiting for you in front of San Antonio de la Florida."

"Suits *me!*"

And, a few minutes later, they met at the indicated spot.

"Let's go where nobody can see us," said the engineer.

"I'll go anywhere you like," answered Berlanga. "Lead the way!"

They crossed the river and came to the little fields out at Fuente de la Teja. The shadows were thicker there, under the trees. At a likely-looking spot the two men stopped. Zureda peered all about him. His eyes, used to penetrating dark horizons, seemed to grow calm. The two men were all alone.

"I've brought you here," said the engineer, "either to kill you or have you kill me."

Berlanga was pretty tipsy. Brave in his cups, he peered closely at the other. He kept his hands in the pockets of his coat. His brow was frowning; his chin was thrust out and aggressive. He had already guessed what Zureda was going to ask him, and the idea of being catechized revolted his pride.

"It looks to me," he swaggered, "like you and I were going to have a few words."

And immediately he added, as if he could read the thought of Zureda:

"They've been telling you I'm thick with Rafaela, and you're after the facts."

"Yes, that's it," answered the engineer.

"Well, they aren't lying. What's the use of lying? It's so, all right."

Then he held his peace and looked at Zureda. The engineer's eyes were usually big and black, but now by some strange miracle of rage they had become small and red. Neither man made any further speech. There was no need of any. All the words they might have hurled at each other would have been futile. Zureda recoiled a few steps and unsheathed his knife. The silversmith snicked open a big pocket blade.

They fell violently on each other. It was a prehistoric battle, body to body, savage, silent. Manolo was killed. He fell on his back, his face white, his mouth twisted in an unforgettable grimace of pain and hate.

The engineer ran away and was already crossing the bridge, when a woman who had been following him at a short distance began to cry:

"Catch him! Catch him! He's just killed a man!"

A couple of policemen, at the door of an inn, stopped Zureda. They arrested him and handcuffed him. He made no resistance.

Rafaela went to see him in jail. The engineer, because of his love for her and for the boy, received her with affection. He assured her he had got into a fight with Manolo over a card-game. Fourteen or fifteen months later he maintained the same story, in court. He claimed he and Manolo had been playing *mus*, and that by way of a joke on his friends he had thrown away one of the cards in his hand and slipped himself another. Then he said Berlanga had denounced him as a cheat; they had quarreled, and had challenged each other.

Thus spoke Amadeo Zureda, in his chivalric attempt not to throw even the lightest shadow on the good name of the woman he adored. Who could have acted more nobly that he? The state's attorney arraigned him in crushing terms, implacably.

And the judge gave him twenty years at hard labor.

V

SCOURGED by poverty, which was not long in arriving, Rafaela had to move away to a little village of Castile, where she had relatives. These were poor farming people, making a hard fight for existence. By way of excuse for her coming to them, the young woman made up a story. She said that Amadeo had got into some kind of trouble with his employers, had been discharged and had gone to Argentina, for there he had heard engineers got excellent pay. After that, she had decided to leave Madrid, where food and lodging were very dear. She ended her tale judiciously:

"As soon as I hear from Amadeo that he's got a good job, I'm going out there to him."

Her relatives believed her, took pity on her and found her work. Every day, with the first light of morning, Rafaela went down to the river to wash. The river was about half a kilometer from the little village. By washing and ironing, at times, or again by picking up wood in the country and selling it, Rafaela managed, with hard, persistent toil, to make four or five *reals* a day.

Two years passed. By this time the neighbors were beginning to find out from the mail-carrier that the addresses on all the letters coming to Rafaela were written by the same hand and all bore the postmark of Ceuta. This news got about and set things buzzing. The young woman put an end to folks' gossip by very sensibly confessing the truth that Amadeo was in prison there. She said a gambling-scrape had got him into trouble. In her confession she adopted a resigned and humble manner, like a model wife who, in spite of having suffered much, nevertheless forgives the man she loves, and pardons all the wrongs done her. People called her unfortunate. They tattled a while, and then took pity on her and accepted her.

Worn out by time and hardships, her former beauty — piquant in a way, though a bit common — soon faded away. The sun tanned her skin; the

dust of the country roads got into her hair, once so clean and wavy; hard work toughened and deformed her hands, which in better days she had well cared for. She gave over wearing corsets, and this hastened the ruin of her body. Slowly her breasts grew flaccid, her abdomen bulged, her whole figure took on heavy fullnesses. And her clothes, too, bit by bit got torn and spoiled. Her petticoats and stockings, her neat patent-leather boots bought in happier days, disappeared sadly, one after the other. Rafaela, who had lost all desire to be coquettish or to please men, let herself slide into poverty; and, in the end, she sank so low as to slop round the village streets, barefooted.

This disintegration of her will coincided with a serious loss and confusion of her memory. The poor woman began to forget everything; and the few recollections she still retained grew so disjointed, so vague that they no longer were able to arouse any stimulating emotion in her. She had never really loved Berlanga. What she had felt for him had been only a kind of caprice, an unreasoning will o' the wisp passion; but this amorous dalliance had soon faded out. And the only reason she had kept on with the silversmith had been because she had been afraid of him and had been weak-willed. The smith, moreover, had become jealous and had often beaten her. Thus his tragic death, far from causing her any grief, had come to her as an agreeable surprise. It had quieted her, rested her, freed her.

If the punishment of Zureda and his confinement in prison walls wounded her deeply, it was not on account of her broken love for the engineer. No, rather was it because this disaster had disturbed the easy, comfortable rhythm of her life and because the exile of her husband had meant misery for her, poverty, the irremediable overthrow of her whole future.

After the crisis which had wrecked her home, Rafaela — hardly noticing it, herself — had grown stupid, old and of defective memory. The many violent and dramatic shocks she had borne in so short a time had annihilated her mediocre spirit. She suffered no remorse and had no very clear idea as to whether her past conduct had been good or bad. It was as if her conscience had sunk away into unthinking stupor. The only thing that still remained in her, unchanged, was the maternal instinct of living and working for little Manolo, so that he, too, might live.

True enough, on certain days the wretched woman drank deeply the cup of gall, as certain memories returned. Now and then there came to her a poisoned vision of black recollections that rose about her, stifling her. This usually happened down at the river-bank, while she was washing, at times of mental abstraction caused by her monotonous and purely mechanical toil. Then her eyes would fill with tears, which slowly rolled down her cheeks and fell upon her hands, now reddened by hard labor and the cold caress of the water. The other washwomen, all about her, observed her grief, and fell to whispering:

"See how she's crying?"

"Poor thing!"

"Poor? Well — it was her own doing. Fate is just. It gives everybody what they deserve. Why didn't she look out who she was marrying?"

From time to time away down at the end of the valley, shut in behind an undulating line of blue hills, a train passed by. Its strident whistle, enlarged and flung about hither and yon by echoes, broke the silence of the plain. Some few of the younger washwomen usually sat up on their heels, then, and followed with their eyes the precipitate on-rushing of the train. You could behold a dreaming sadness in their eyes, a vision of far-off, unseen cities. But Rafaela never raised her head to look at the train. The shrieking whistle tore at her ears with the vibration of a familiar voice. She kept on washing, while her tear-wet eyes seemed to be peering at the mysteries of forgetfulness in the passing water.

Despite the great physical and moral decline of the poor woman, she did not fail to waken thoughts and hopes in a certain man. To her aspired a fellow named Benjamin, by trade a shoemaker. He was already turning fifty years, was a widower and had two sons in the army.

This Benjamin's affairs went along only so-so, because not all the people of the village could afford to wear shoes, and those who could afford them did not feel any great need of wearing fine or new ones. Rafaela washed and mended his clothes, and ironed a shirt for him, every saint's-day. He paid her little, but regularly, for these services; and gradually friendship grew up between them. This mutual liking, which was at first impersonal and calm, finally grew in the shoemaker's heart till it became the fire of love.

"If you were only willing," Señor Benjamin often said to Rafaela, "we could come to an understanding. You're all alone. So am I. Well, why not live together?"

She smiled, with that disillusion which comes to a soul that life has bit by bit ravaged of all its dreams.

"You're crazy to talk that way, Benjamin," she would answer.

"Why?"

"Oh, because."

"Come now, explain that! Why am I crazy?"

Rafaela did not want to annoy the man, because she would thus lose a customer, and so she gave him an evasive answer:

"Why, I'm already old."

"Not for me!"

"I'm ugly!"

"That's a matter of taste. You suit *me* to a T."

"Thanks. But, what would people say? And suppose we had any children, Benjamin! What would they think of us?"

"Oh, there's a thousand ways to cover it all up. You just take a shine to me, and I'll fix everything else."

Rafaela promised to think it over; and every night when she came home from work, Benjamin jokingly asked her, from his door:

"Well, neighbor, how about it?"

"I'm still thinking it over," she answered, with a laugh.

"It seems to be pretty hard for you to decide."

"It surely is!"

"Yes, but are you going to get it settled?"

"How do *I* know, Benjamin? Sometimes I think one thing, and sometimes another. Time will tell!"

But the soul of Rafaela lay dead. Nothing could revive her illusions. The shoemaker, after many efforts, had to give her up. And always after that, when he saw her pass along, he would heave a sigh in an absurd, romantic manner.

On the first of every month, Rafaela always wrote a four-page letter to Zureda, containing all the petty details of her quiet, humdrum life. It was by means of these letters, written on commercial cap, that the prisoner learned the rapid physical growth of little Manolo. By the time the boy had reached twelve years he had become rebellious, quarrelsome and idle. He was still in the pot-hook class, at school. Stone-throwing was one of his favorite habits. One day he injured another boy of his age so severely that the constable gathered him in, and nothing but the fatherly intervention of the priest saved him from a night in the lock-up.

Rafaela always ended up the paragraphs thus, in which she described the fierce wildness of the boy:

"I tell you plainly, I can't manage him."

This seemed a confession of weariness, that outlined both a threat and a prophecy.

The prisoner wrote her, in one of his letters:

"The last jail pardon, that you may have read about in the papers, let out many of my companions. I had no such luck. But, anyhow, they cut five years off my time. So there are only six years more between us."

Regularly the letters came and went between Rafaela and the prisoner at Ceuta. Two years more drew to their close.

But evil fortune had not yet grown weary of stamping its heel on Amadeo Zureda's honest shoulders.

"Please forgive me, dear Rafaela," the prisoner wrote again, after a while, "the new sorrow I must cause you. But by the life of our son I swear I could not avoid the misfortune which most expectedly is going to prolong our separation, for I don't know how long.

"As you may guess, there are few saints among the rough crowd here, that are scraped up from all the prisons in Spain. Though I have to live among them, I don't consider them my equals. For that reason I try to keep away from them, and have nothing to do with their rough mirth or noisy quarrels. Well, it happened that the end of last week a smart-

Aleck of a fellow came in, an Andalusian. He had been given twelve years for killing one man and badly injuring another. As soon as this fellow saw me, he took me for a boob he could make sport of, and lost no chance of poking fun at me. I kept quiet, and — so as not to get into any mix-up with him — turned my back on him.

"Yesterday, at dinner, he tried to pick a quarrel. Some of the other prisoners laughed and set him on to me.

"'Look here, Amadeo,' said he. 'What are you in for?'

"I answered, looking him square in the eyes:

"'For having killed a man.'

"'And what did you kill him for?' he insisted.

"I said nothing, and then he added something very coarse and ugly that I won't repeat. It's enough for you to know your name was mixed up in it. That's why your name was the last word his mouth ever uttered. I drew my knife — you know that in spite of all the care they take, and all their searches, we all go armed — and cried:

"'Look out for yourself, now, because I'm going to kill you!'

"Then we fought, and it was a good fight, too, because he was a brave man. But his courage was of no use to him. He died on the spot.

"Forgive me, dearest Rafaela of my soul, and make our boy forgive me, too. This makes my situation much worse, because now I shall have another trial and I don't know what sentence I'll get. I realize it was very bad of me to kill this man, but if I hadn't done it he would have killed me, which would have been much worse for all of us."

Several months after, Zureda wrote again:

"I have been having my trial. Luckily all the witnesses testified in my behalf, and this, added to the good opinion the prison authorities have of me, has greatly improved my position. The indictment was terrible, but I'm not worrying much about that. To-morrow I shall know my sentence."

All the letters of Amadeo Zureda were like this, peaceful and noble, seemingly dictated by the most resigned stoicism. He never let anything find its way into them which might remind Rafaela of her fault. In these pages, filled with a strong, even writing, there was neither reproach, dejection, nor despairing impatience. They seemed to be the admirable reflection of an iron will which had been taught by misfortune — the most excellent mother of all knowledge — to understand the dour secret of hoping and of waiting.

VI

The very same day when Amadeo Zureda got out of jail, he received from Rafaela a letter which began thus:

"Little Manolo was twenty years old, yesterday."

The one-time engineer left the boat from Africa at Valencia, passed the night at an inn not far from the railroad station, and early next morning took the train which was to carry him to Ecks. After so many years of imprisonment, the old convict felt that nervous restlessness, that lack of self-confidence, that cruel fear of destiny which men ill-adapted to their environment are accustomed to feel every time life presents itself to them under a new aspect. Defeat at last makes men cowardly and pessimistic. They recall everything they have suffered and the uselessness of all their struggles, and they think: "This, that I am now beginning, will turn out badly for me too, like all the rest."

Amadeo Zureda had altered greatly. His white mustache formed a sad contrast with his wrinkled face, tanned by the African sun. The expression of an infinite pain seemed to deepen the peaceful gaze of his black eyes. The vertical wrinkle in his brow had deepened until it seemed a scar. His body, once strong and erect, had grown thin; and as he walked he bent somewhat forward.

The rattling uproar of the train and the swift succession of panoramas now unrolling before his eyes recalled to the memory of Zureda the joys of those other and better times when he had been an engineer — joys now largely blotted out by the distance of long-gone years. He remembered Pedro, the Andalusian fireman, and those two engines, "Sweetie" and "Nigger," on which he had worked so long. An inner voice seemed asking him: "What can have become of all this?"

He also thought about his house. He mentally built up again its façade, beheld its balconies and evoked the appearance of each room. His memory, clouded by the grim and brutalizing life of the prison, had never dipped so profoundly into the past, nor had it ever brushed away the dust from his old memories and so clearly reconstructed them. He thought about his son, about Rafaela and Manolo Berlanga, seeming to behold their faces and even their clothing just as they had been long ago; and he felt surprised that revocation of the silversmith's face should produce no pain in him. At that moment and in spite of the irreparable injury which had been done him, he felt no hatred of Berlanga. All the rancor which until then had possessed him seemed to sink down peacefully into an unknown and ineffable emotion of pity and forgetfulness. The poor convict once more examined his conscience, and felt astonished that he could no longer find any poison there. May it not be, after all, that liberty reforms a man?

At Játiva a man got into the car, a man already old, whose face seemed to the former engineer to bear some traces of a friendly appearance. The new-comer also, on his side, looked at Zureda as if he remembered him. Thus both of them little by little silently drew together. In the end they studied each other with warm interest, as if sure of having sometime known each other before. Amadeo was the first to speak.

"It seems to me," said he, "that we have already seen each other somewhere, years ago."

"That was just what I was thinking, myself," answered the other.

"The fact is," went on the engineer, "I'm sure we must have talked to each other, many times."

"Yes, yes!"

"We must have been friends, sometime."

"Probably."

And they continued looking at each other, enwrapped by the same thought. Zureda asked:

"Have you ever lived in Madrid?"

"Yes, ten or twelve years."

"Where?"

"Near the Estación del Norte, where I was an employee."

"Say no more!" exclaimed Zureda. "I worked for the same company, myself. I was an engineer."

"On what line?"

"Madrid to Bilbao."

Slowly and silently memories began to rise and group themselves together in the enormous, black forgetfulness of those twenty years. Amadeo Zureda took out his tobacco-box and offered tobacco to his companion. Whatever seemed to have been lacking to awaken memory, in the other's appearance or in his voice, was now instantly supplied as the engineer saw him take the fine-cut, roll a cigarette, light it and afterward thrust it into the left corner of his mouth. The memories of the old convict were flooded with light.

"Enough of this!" cried he. "You are Don Adolfo Moreno!"

"That's right, I'm the man!"

"You were a conductor on the Asturias line when I worked on the one running to Bilbao. Don't you remember me? Amadeo Zureda?"

"Yes, indeed!"

The two men embraced each other.

"Why, I used to say 'thee' and 'thou' to you!" cried Don Adolfo.

"Yes, yes, I remember that, too. I remember everything, now. We were good friends once, eh? Well, time seems to have made some pretty big changes in both of us."

When the joy of the first moments of meeting had been somewhat allayed, the former conductor and the old engineer grew sad as they recalled the many bitter experiences life had dealt them.

"I've already heard of your misfortune," said Don Adolfo, "and I was mighty sorry to hear about it. Sometimes a youthful moment of madness, that lasts only a minute, will cost a man his whole future. Why did you do it?"

Stolidly Zuredo answered:

"Oh, it was a quarrel over cards."

"Yes, that's so; they told me about it."

Amadeo breathed easy. The conductor knew nothing; and it seemed probable that many others should be as ignorant as he about what had driven him to kill Manolo. Don Adolfo asked:

"Where have you been?"

"At Ceuta."

"A long time?"

"Twenty years and some months."

"The deuce! You've just come from down there?"

"Yes, sir."

"It's evident to me," continued Don Adolfo, "you've suffered a great deal more than I have; but you mustn't think I have been lucky, either. Life is a wild animal that drags down every one who tries to grapple with it, and yet people keep right on struggling. I'm a widower. My poor wife has been dust for nearly fifteen years. The eldest of my three daughters got married, and both the others died. Now I'm on a pension and live at Ecks with a sister-in-law, the widow of my brother Juan. I don't think you remember him."

Little by little, and with many beatings about the bush, because confidence is a timid quality which soon takes flight from those scourged by misfortune, the ex-convict told his plans. He hoped to establish himself at Ecks, with his wife. He had brought about two thousand pesetas from prison, with which he hoped to buy a little house and a bit of good land.

"I don't know beans about farming," he added, "but that's like everything else. You learn by doing. Moreover, my son, who has grown up in the town, will help me a great deal."

Don Adolfo wrinkled his brow with a grave and reflective expression, like a man who is remembering something.

"From what you say," he exclaimed, "I think I know who your wife is."

The old engineer felt shame. The bleeding image of his misfortune was hard to wipe from his memory. The mention of his wife had freshened it. He answered:

"You probably do know her. The village must be very small."

"Very small, indeed. What's your wife's name?"

"Rafaela."

"Yes, yes," answered Don Adolfo. "Rafaela's the woman. I know her well. As for Manolo, your son, I know him too."

Amadeo Zureda trembled. He felt afraid, and cold. For a few moments he remained silent, without knowing what to say. Don Adolfo continued with rough frankness:

"Your Manolo is a pretty tough nut, and he gives his poor mother a mighty hard time. She's a saint, that woman. I think he even beats her. Well, I won't tell you any more."

Pale and trembling, putting down a great desire to weep which had just come over him, Amadeo asked:

"Is it possible? Can he be as bad as that?"

"I tell you he's a dandy!" repeated Don Adolfo. "If he died, the devil would think a good while before taking him. He's a drunkard and a gambler, always chasing women and fighting. He's the limit!" After a moment he added: "Really, he don't seem like a son of yours, at all."

Amadeo Zureda made no answer. Looking out of the car window, he tried to distract himself with the landscape. The old conductor's words had crushed him. He had been ignorant of all this, for Rafaela in her letters had said nothing about it. He was astonished at realizing how evil destiny was attacking him, denying him that rest which every hard-working man, no matter how poor, is at last entitled to.

Retracing the hateful pathway of his memories, he reached the source of all his misfortunes. Twenty years before, when Señor Tomás had told him of the relations between Rafaela and Manolo, he too had declared: "They say he beats her."

What connection might there be between these statements, which seemed to weave a nexus of hate between the son and the dead lover? Once more the words of the old conductor sounded in his ears, and prophetically took hold upon his soul:

"Manolo does not appear to be your son."

Without having read Darwin, Amadeo Zureda instinctively sought explanation and consolation in the laws of heredity, for the pain now consuming him. Never had he, even when a young fellow, been given to drink or cards. He had not been fond of the women, nor had he been a meddler and bully. And how had such degradations been able to engraft themselves into the blood of his son?

Don Adolfo and Zureda got out at the station of Ecks. Afternoon was drawing to its close. On the platform there were only six or seven persons. The former conductor waved his hand to a woman and to a young man, drawing near. He cried:

"There are your folks!"

This time seeing Rafaela, Amadeo did not hesitate. It was she indeed, despite her protuberant abdomen, her sad fat face, and her white hair. It was she!

"Rafaela!" cried he. He would have known her among a thousand other women. They fell into each other's arms, weeping with that enormous joy and pain felt by all who part in youth and meet again in old age, with the whole of life behind them. After the greeting with his wife was at an end, the engineer embraced Manolo.

"What a fine fellow you are!" he stammered, when the beating of his heart, growing a little more calm, let him speak.

Don Adolfo said good-by.

"I'm in a hurry. We'll see each other to-morrow!" He saluted, and walked away.

Amadeo Zureda, with Rafaela at his right and Manolo at his left quitted the station.

"Is the town very far away?" asked he.

"Hardly two kilometers," she answered.

"All right then, let's walk."

Slowly they made their way down the road that stretched, winding, between two vast reaches of brown, plowed land. Far in the distance, lighted by the dying sun, the little hamlet was visible; that miserable collection of huts about which Zureda had thought so many times, dreaming that there he should find the sweet refuge of peaceful forgetfulness and of redemption.

VII

After Amadeo came to Ecks, Rafaela went no longer to the river. The former engineer was unwilling that his wife should toil. They had enough for all to live on for a while, with what he had made in prison. They spoke not of the past. You might almost have thought they had forgotten it. Why remember? Zureda had forgiven everything. Rafaela, moreover, was no longer the same. The gay happiness of her eyes had gone dead; the waving blackness of her hair and the girlish quickness of her body had vanished. There was a melancholy abandonment, heavy with remorse, in her sad and flabby face, in the humility of her look, in the slow, round fatness of her whole body.

The ex-convict followed the advice of Don Adolfo and gave up all idea of devoting himself to farming. In the best street of the village, near the church, he set up a general repair-shop where he took in both wood and iron work. There he shod a mule, mended a cart or put a new coulter to a plow, with equal facility.

He had not been established long when his modest little business began to pick up and be a real money-maker. Very soon his customers increased. The disquieting story of his imprisonment seemed forgotten. Everybody liked him, for he was good, affable and pleasant, in a melancholy way. He paid his little debts promptly, and worked hard.

Zureda felt life once more grow calm. Slowly his future, which till then had looked stormy, commenced to appear a land of hospitality, comfortable and good. The threat of to-morrow, which makes so many men uneasy, had ceased to be a problem for him. His future was already founded, laid out, foreseen. The fifteen or twenty years that still might remain to him, he hoped to pass in the loving accumulation of a little fortune to leave his Rafaela.

He got up with the sun and worked industriously all day, driven by

this ambition. In the evening he took a dog that Don Adolfo had given him, and went wandering in the outskirts of the village. One of his favorite walks was out to the cemetery. He often pushed open the old gate, which never was quite closed, and in the burial-ground sat himself down upon a broken mill-stone which happened to be there. Seated thus, he liked to smoke a cigarette.

Many crosses were blackening with age, in the tall grass that covered the earth. The old man often called up memories of the time when he had been an engineer. He remembered the prison, too, and his tired will seemed to tremble. Peacefully he looked about him. Here, sometime, would be his bed. What rest, what silence! And he breathed deep, enthralled by the rare and calming joy of willingness to die. Here inside the old wall of mud bricks, reddened by the setting sun — here in this garden of forgetfulness — how well one ought to sleep!

Only one trouble disturbed and embittered the peaceful decline of Amadeo Zureda. This trouble was his son, Manolo. Through an excess of fatherly love, doubtless mistaken, he had the year before got Manolo exempted from military service. The boy's wild, vicious character was fanatically rebellious against all discipline. In vain Zureda sought to teach him a trade. Threats and entreaties, as well as all kinds of wise advice, were shattered against the invincibly gypsy-like will of the young fellow.

"If you don't want to support me," Manolo often used to say, "let me go. Kick me out. I'll get by, on my own hook."

Often and often Manolo vanished from the little town. He stayed away for days at a time, engaged in mysterious adventures. People coming in from neighboring villages reported him as given over to gaming. One night he showed up with a serious wound in the groin, a deep knife-stab.

"Who did that to you?" demanded Zureda.

The youth answered:

"Nobody's business. *I* know who it is. Sometime or other he'll get his, all right!"

To save himself from police investigation, Zureda said nothing about it. For some weeks, Manolo kept quiet. But early one morning a couple of rural guards found the body of a man on the river-bank. His body was covered with stabs. All investigations to find the murderer were fruitless. The crime remained unavenged. Only Amadeo — who just a bit after the discovery of the body had discovered Manolo washing a blood-stained handkerchief in a water-jar — was certain that his son had done this murder.

Once more the sinister words of Don Adolfo recurred to his mind, bruising him, maddening him, seeming to bore into his very brain:

"He does not seem to be your son, at all!"

Amadeo pondered this, and decided it was true. The boy did not seem his. Manolo's outlaw way of living did not stop here. Taking advantage

of his mother's love and of the quiet disposition of Amadeo, almost every day he showed the very greatest need of money.

"I've got to have a hundred pesetas," he would say. "I've just *got* to have them! If you people don't come across, well, all right! I'll get them, some way. But perhaps you'll be sorry then, you didn't give them to me!"

He was mad for enjoyment. When his mother tried to warn and advise him, saying: "Why don't you work, you young wretch? Don't you see how your father does?" — he would retort:

"I don't call *that* living, to work! I'd rather go hang myself, than live the way the old man lives!"

You would have thought Rafaela was his slave, by the lack of decency and respect he showed her. When he called her, he would hardly condescend to look at her at all. He spoke little to his father, and what he said was rough and harsh. The worst boy in the world could not have acted with more insolence. His wild spirit, lusting pleasure, seemed to burn with an instinctive flame of hate.

One night when Amadeo came home from the Casino where he and Don Adolfo, with the druggist and a few other such-like worthies, were wont to meet every Saturday, he found the door of his shop ajar. This astonished him. He raised his voice and began to call:

"Manolo! You, Manolo!"

Rafaela answered him, from the back room of the house:

"He's not here."

"Do you know whether he's going to come back soon? I want to know, before locking up."

A short silence followed. After a bit, Rafaela answered:

"You'd better lock up, anyhow."

There seemed to be something like a sob of grief in the voice of the poor woman. The old engineer, alarmed by a presentiment of something terrible, strode through the shop and went on into the house. Rafaela was sitting in front of the stove, in the kitchen, her hands humbly crossed on her lap, her eyes full of tears, her white hair rumpled up, as if some parricide hand had furiously seized her head. Zureda took hold of his wife by the shoulders and forced her to get up.

"What — what's happened?" he stammered.

Rafaela's nose was all bloody, her forehead was bruised and her hands bore lacerations.

"What's the matter with you?" repeated the engineer.

Old and dull as were his eyes, now they blazed up again with that red lightning of death which, twenty years before, had sent him to prison. Rafaela was terrified, and tried to lie out of it.

"It's nothing, Amadeo," she stammered. "Nothing, I tell you. Let me tell you. I — I fell — that's the living truth!"

But Zureda shook the truth out of her with threats, almost with violence.

"Manolo's been beating you, eh? He has, hasn't he?"

She began to sob, still trying to deny it, not wanting to accuse her heart's darling. The old engineer repeated, trembling with rage:

"He beat you, eh? What?"

Rafaela took a long time to answer. She was afraid to speak, but finally she confessed everything.

"Yes, yes, he did. Oh — it's terrible!"

"What did he beat you for?"

"Because he wanted money."

"God! The swine!"

The rage and pain of the old convict burst out in a leonine roar, that filled the kitchen.

"He told you that?" demanded Amadeo. "Said he wanted money?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Twenty-five pesetas. I refused as long as I could. But what could I do? Oh, if you'd seen him then, you wouldn't have known him. I was awfully scared — thought he was going to kill me ——"

As she said this, she covered her eyes with her hands. She seemed to be shutting out from them, together with the ugly vision of what had just happened, some other sight — the sight of something horrible, something long-past, something quite the same.

Zureda, afraid of showing the tumultuous rage in his heart, said nothing more. The most ominous memories crowded his mind. A long, long time ago, before he had gone to jail, Don Tomás in the course of an unforgettable conversation had told him that Manolo Berlanga maltreated Rafaela. And all these years afterward, when he was once more a free man, Don Adolfo had said the same thing about young Manolo. Remembering this strange agreement of opinions, Amadeo Zureda felt a bitter and inextinguishable hate against the whole race of the silversmith — a race accursed, it seemed, which had come into the world only to hurt and wound him in his dearest affections.

Next morning the old man, who had hardly slept more than an hour or two, woke early.

"What time is it?" asked he.

Rafaela had already risen. She answered:

"Almost six."

"Has Manolo come back?"

"Not yet."

The old engineer got out of bed, dressed as usual and went down to his shop. Rafaela kept watch on him. The apparent calm of the old man looked suspicious. Noon came, and Manolo did not return for dinner.

Night drew on, nor did he come back to sleep. Zureda and his wife went to bed early. A few days drifted along.

Sunday morning, Zureda was sitting at the door of his shop. It was just eleven. Women, some with mantillas, others with but a simple kerchief knotted about their heads, were going to mass. High up in the Gothic steeple, the bells were swinging, gay and clangorous. A neighbor, passing, said to the engineer:

"Well, Manolo's showed up."

"When?" asked Zureda, phlegmatically.

"Last night."

"Where did you see him?"

"At Honorio's inn."

"A great one, that boy is! He's certainly some fine lad! Never came near *me!*"

The day drew on, without anything happening. Cautiously the engineer guarded against telling Rafaela that their son had returned. A little while before supper, giving her the excuse that Don Adolfo was waiting for him at the Casino, Zureda left the house and made his way to the inn where Manolo was wont to meet his rough friends. There he found him, indeed, gaming with cards.

"I've got something to say to you," said he.

The young man threw his cards on the table and got up. He was tall, slim and good-looking; and in the thin line of his lips and the penetrant gaze of his greenish eyes lay something bold, defiant.

The two men went out into the street, and, saying no word, walked to the outskirts of the town. When Amadeo thought they had come to a good place, he stopped and looked his son fair in the face.

"I've brought you out here," said he, "to tell you you're never coming back to my house. Understand me?"

Manolo nodded "Yes."

"I'm throwing you out," continued the old man. "Get that, too! I'm throwing you out, because I won't deal with a dog like you. I won't have one anywhere around! I tell you that not as father to son, but as one man to another, so you can come back at me if you want to. Understand? I'm ready for you! That's why I've brought you 'way out here."

As he spoke, slowly his stern spirit caught fire. His cheeks grew pale, and in his jacket pockets his fists knotted. Manolo's savage blood began to boil, as well.

"Don't make me say anything, you!" he flung at his father.

He turned as if to walk away. His voice, his gesture, the scornful shrug of his shoulders, with which he seemed to underscore his words, all were those of a ruffian and a bully. Any body would have said that the tough, swaggering silversmith lived again, in him. Zureda controlled his anger, and began once more:

"If you want to fight, you'll be a fool to wait till to-morrow. I'm ready for it, now."

"Crazy, you?" demanded the youth.

"No!"

"Well, you act it!"

"You're wrong. I know all about *you* — I know you've been beating your mother. And you can't pay for a thing like that even with every drop of your blood. No, sir! Not even the last drop of pig's blood you've got in your body would pay for that!"

Amadeo Zureda was afraid of himself. He had begun to shiver. All the hate that, long ago, had flung him upon Berlanga, now had burst forth again in a fresh, strong, overwhelming torrent.

Suddenly Manolo stepped up to his father and seized him by the lapel.

"You going to shut up?" he snarled, in rage. "Or are you bound to drive me to it?"

Zureda's answer was a smash in the face. Then the two men fell upon each other, first with their fists, presently with knives. At that moment the old man saw in the face of the man he had believed his son, the same expression of hate that twenty years ago had distorted the features of Manolo Berlanga. Those eyes, that mouth all twisted into a grimace of ferocity, that slim and feline body now trembling with rage, all were like the silversmith's. The look of the father came back again in that of the son, as exactly as if both faces had been poured in the same mold.

And for the first time, after so long a time, the old engineer clearly understood everything.

Annihilated by the realization of this new disaster, no longer having any heart to defend himself, the wretched man let his arms fall. And just at this moment Manolo, beside himself with rage, plunged the fatal blade into his breast.

Now with his vengeance complete, the parricide took to flight.

Amadeo Zureda, dying, was carried to the hospital. There, that same night, Don Adolfo came to see him. The good neighbor's grief was terrible, even to the point of the grotesque.

"Is it true, what people are saying?" he asked weeping. "Is it true?"

The wounded man had hardly strength enough to press his hand a very little.

"Good-by, Adolfo," he stammered. "Now I know what I — had to know. You told me, but I — couldn't believe it. But now I know you — were right. Manolo was not — my son —— "

China

INTRODUCTION

NOBODY knows exactly when Chinese literature began, though it is generally maintained that the writings of Confucius, in the Sixth Century B.C., are the first that have come down to us. Fiction as a recognised art form (apart from poetic allegories, anecdotes and fables), was probably not introduced into China until the time of the Mongol Dynasty, which began in 1200 A.D.

The famous story of *The Three Kingdoms*, by Lo Kuan-chung belongs to this epoch (1200–1368), and was followed by a large number of other historical novels and romances. Long novels of war and adventure were especially popular throughout the Mongol and Ming (1368–1644) Dynasties.

The celebrated collection of forty stories known as the *Chin Ku Ch'i Kuan* (*Marvelous Tales, Ancient and Modern*) is a product of the late Ming epoch.

The succeeding (Manchu) Dynasty witnessed the production of P'u Sung-Ling's equally famous *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, most of which are far shorter than those in the earlier collection.

It was during the last part of the Seventeenth Century that the Chinese novel reached the apex of its development. The anonymous and inordinately long *Hung Lou Meng* is generally regarded as the masterpiece of Chinese fiction.

During the past two centuries and a half there has been a certain development in the technique of story-writing, but there are very few outstanding masterpieces.

THE MIRACULOUS PORTRAIT

(Anonymous: 15th Century A.D., or before)

THIS is one of the famous longer stories in *The Marvelous Tales*. It is a characteristic work, showing as it does the writer's ingenuity in telling a straightforward narrative of considerable length. It is an almost perfect example of what I have elsewhere called a miniature novel. By the insertion of longer descriptions and a more detailed analysis of character and motive, it could easily be expanded to the length of the average novel. Yet, as it stands, it is artistically complete.

Nothing is known of the author.

The translation here used was made expressly for this collection, Professor Frank W. Chandler, and appears here for the first time.

THE MIRACULOUS PORTRAIT

UNDER the Ming Dynasty, in the district of Hiango-ho, the province of Pe-tchi-li, and the department of Chun-tien-fou, lived a governor called Ni, whose double name was Cheou-kien and whose honorific name was Y-tchi. He possessed thousands of pieces of gold, fertile lands, and a magnificent mansion. His wife Tchin-chi had borne him but one son, who was surnamed Chen-k'i, which is to say, 'worthy continuator of the reputation of his father.' Scarcely had this son grown to man's estate when he took a wife, and soon after he had the misfortune to lose his mother. His father, the governor, resigned his office and did not remarry. Although advanced in years, he was still sound in mind and full of strength and health. The need of collecting his rents and interest offered ample outlet to his indefatigable activity. He would have blushed to think of allowing his days to pass idly amid the pleasures which his opulence and luxury provided.

One day, when the old man had just reached his seventy-ninth year, his son, Ni-chen-k'i, addressed him, saying: "It is rare that any man should live to the age of seventy; antiquity offers us but few examples. Now, my father, you are just entering your seventy-ninth year; in one year more your eightieth year will weigh upon your head. Why not relieve yourself of the heavy cares that overwhelm you by confiding to me the administration of all your affairs? Will you not be happier in dividing your time between the pleasures of the table and the comforts of tranquillity?"

"If I have but one more day to live," replied the old man, shaking

his head, "I will continue for that day my administration; in doing so, I will spare you many fatigues of mind and body, and I will make certain economies to provide for your future needs. So long as these two frail limbs of mine can still support me, why should it not be my privilege to conduct my own affairs?"

Each year, in the tenth month, the governor was accustomed to go among his farmers to collect his rents, and to remain thus occupied until the new year. The good old man would become for all the people of the household the object of a thousand delicate attentions; it was to him that every thought then turned. Fowls and pheasants, delicious wines and fruit preserves were not spared to multiply his pleasures.

That year, the two last months passed so rapidly for him that, without realizing it, he remained somewhat longer in the country than ordinary. One day, in an interval of leisure, he went out in the afternoon to inspect his property and to enjoy while walking the varied aspects of the rural scene. Suddenly, he saw coming towards him a young girl accompanied by an old, white-haired woman. She turned toward a small body of water and, bending over its margin, she began to wash certain garments and to beat them upon a white and polished stone. Although this young girl was clad like a simple village maiden, her face shone with a freshness and a modest grace which made the beholder forget her humble station.

Her locks were of a shining black like the lacquer of the Tsi tree; her almond eyes gleamed like the waves which played at her feet; her fingers were white and delicate as the young stalks of the Tsong; one would have said that her two graceful eyebrows had been designed by a skilful pencil; a robe of common stuff clung to her light and slender figure, bringing out its attractions even better than finest silk, and displaying its charms better than any rare tissue embellished with rich embroidery; her head was surmounted with flowers which appeared fairer than any pearl ornament or than any headdress woven of gold. This young beauty had seen some eighteen summers.

Scarcely had the governor perceived her than a secret agitation affected his senses and appeared upon his face; his eyes sparkled, all his body trembled, he remained mute with admiration.

After having finished washing the garments, the young girl left the waterside, and departed, following the lady with white hair. The old man observed her with emotion, and saw that, after having passed many houses of the village, she knocked at the door of a little white cottage surrounded with a hedge of interlaced bamboos. There she entered and disappeared.

The governor returned in haste, called a farmer, and told him in detail of what had just happened. "Go," said he, "find the parents of this girl, and bring me full information concerning her. Ask above all if she is betrothed to any one; if not, it is my intention to marry her as a second wife. But I do not know whether she will deign to heed my supplications."

The farmer left at once, impatient to execute the orders of his master. It did not take him long to learn that the name of the family of the girl was Mei, and that her father had been a man of the learned class of the first distinction. Having lost both him and her mother in her early infancy, she had been reared by her grandmother, whom she had never left for a moment. She was now eighteen, but she had been promised as yet to no one.

Having obtained the necessary information, the farmer called upon the lady with the white hair. "My master," said he, "has observed your granddaughter, and, charmed by her beauty and her distinguished manner, he desires to ask you for her in marriage as his second wife. Although he is not of the highest rank, I can assure you that since it is years ago that he lost his first wife, and since he has no one to govern his house, the moment that she becomes his wife, she will be richly clad and luxuriously nourished, and that in short nothing will be left undone to satisfy her desires. You yourself, madam, you may count on his giving you to the end of your days tea and rice and fine garments in abundance; and when your last hour shall sound, he will make it his duty to conduct you to the field of repose amid all due ceremonies and with a pomp worthy of his station and his fortune. All that I fear, madam, is that you may not know how to profit by the good fortune which outruns even your desires."

In listening to these words, which appeared to her beautiful as silk ornamented with flowers and embroidery, the old lady made an affirmative sign; and as the marriage appeared to her prepared in advance by heaven, this single interview sufficed to ratify it.

The farmer returned to find the governor, who was transported with joy at the news. He chose his bridal presents and examined the calendar to find a propitious day. Yet he feared that his son might interpose obstacles to the projected union. Now, as it was at the farm that the betrothal occurred, it was there also that the marriage was accomplished. On the evening of the wedding, it was truly a touching spectacle to see the old man and his young bride. The following passage drawn from gallant verses made on that occasion will better explain my thought.

"On one side stands a white-haired man covered with a vestment of dark crêpe; on the other a young girl with black and flowing tresses, rich in her garments and her charms. The twisted tree and a young and fragrant vine embracing its dry branches might offer some idea of this couple strangely contrasted. One trembles with inquietude, the other is agitated with a secret fear. He fears that in the coming contest his powers will not be equal to the ardor which animates him."

As soon as night had come, the old man nobly sustained the combat which crowned his vows, and more than once renewed his ancient prowess.

On the fourth day, the governor ordered a sedan chair and conducted

home his new bride to present her to his son and to his son's wife. All the folk of the house, men, women, young girls, hastened to render to her their respects, and, after prostrating themselves to the earth, they called her Siao-naï-naï, or young bride. The governor distributed among them all pieces of rare stuff suitable to their taste and their condition; and each was enchanted with the master and with his presents. But the son, Ni-chen-k'i, did not share the general joy. It is true that openly he did not dare to manifest his discontent. But, when he could speak aside to his wife, he might not longer restrain his indignation.

"To think," said he to her, "that this old fellow should wound every sentiment of propriety, he who totters under the weight of years, and whose life is like the flame of a lamp exposed to the wind. Can one act thus without foreseeing the consequences? For five years, ten years, perhaps, while he remains in the world, does he think that he is doing a praiseworthy thing, even a moral thing, to marry this young person, fresh and brilliant as a branch burgeoning into flower, one who as a reward for her tender attachment can receive only cold and impotent caresses? Are there many octogenarians who would take a companion of eighteen years? Soon the decrepitude of her husband will render him insupportable to his young wife. Deceived in her legitimate ardor, she will abandon herself to vice, and her shame, her dishonor, will react upon our family. In short, is not this marriage comparable to a plague with which heaven strikes us on the eve of an abundant harvest? After having captured the confidence of her old husband, she will withdraw now one object, now another, to make herself rich at our expense. One day, she will ask of him clothing, another day, jewels. Blinded by his foolish passion, he will dare to refuse her nothing, until at last, deprived of all, he will see realized in his own case the proverb: "When the tree is cut down, the birds fly away." Like the worm which eats the heart of the tree, and the insect which devours the grain, she will little by little absorb the fortune of our father and reduce him to beggary; then, some bright morning, she will pack her baggage and go to enjoy elsewhere the fruit of her pillage. This young woman, with her graces and vaunted attractions, has she not the appearance of a courtesan? Wholly lacking in dignity and nobility, she has nothing which would indicate a distinguished origin. Devoted companion of the old man whom she has rendered the slave of all her caprices, she gives herself airs of importance, and affects the tone and manners of a person of quality. What is her rôle with our father? Is it not that of a concubine and a domestic? Let us hope that some day he will repulse her pretensions. Can one conceive the blindness of a father who enjoins upon every one to designate this creature only by the most noble name? Can she think that we will submit to this humiliating etiquette and that we will obey her like servants? An excellent means to give her an exalted idea of herself and to draw down upon us ere long from her the most cruel affronts!"

It was thus that the two murmured together and allowed themselves to utter the most gross accusations against their relatives. These grumblings, overheard by the indiscreet, were passed from mouth to mouth and soon reached the ears of the old man.

Although the governor was afflicted by such scandalous talk, he managed to keep within his own breast the grief that troubled him. Happily, his young wife was endowed with a disposition sweet and affable; full of deference and of submission before her superiors, she received with perfect grace those placed beneath her, so that in the house she rendered every one most happy.

Two months had scarcely passed before she found herself with child. She hid this knowledge so well that there was no one except her husband who was in the secret. Three months, six months passed without her condition exciting the least suspicion; at last, in the ninth month she brought to birth a son.

At the news, all the house was struck with astonishment and admiration.

Since this day was the ninth of the ninth moon, the child was called Tchong-yang-eul, a name recalling the precise epoch in which he came into the world.

The eleventh day of the same month was the birthday of the governor, now entering his eightieth year. His mansion was soon filled with a crowd of visitors who came to present to him their compliments and felicitations.

The old man gave them a splendid repast to celebrate at once the anniversary of his birth and the ceremony of bathing the newborn on his third day.

"My lord," said the guests, "on seeing you obtain a second son at years so advanced, it is easy to believe that your body has lost nothing of its vigor, and that you will attain to the last chapter of old age."

But this event, which rendered happy the father, excited in secret the anger of Ni-chen-k'i. "Every one knows," said he, "that at sixty years man ordinarily loses that quality which characterizes his virile period; and the truer this must be at eighty. Has one ever seen a dry tree crowned with flowers? For myself, I do not know to what to attribute this affair, but I am convinced that my father is completely a stranger to the birth of this child. Decidedly, I cannot recognize as my brother one whose illegitimacy is only too evident."

These remarks came also to the ears of the old man, who kept them in his heart.

But time passed with the rapidity of the arrow which cuts the air. A year had flown since the birth of Tchong-yang-eul. It was the period in which is celebrated the ancient ceremony called Soui-pan-hoei. All his relatives and friends came to felicitate him. But Ni-chen-k'i left the house to avoid keeping company with these new guests.

The old man, who knew the secret motive of this conduct, made no attempt to call him back and invite him to the family feast, which was preparing. He remained with his relatives and drank with them all day. Nevertheless, he was so oppressed by the worry caused him by his elder son that he could not open his mouth to utter a single word.

As Ni-chen-k'i was naturally avaricious and jealous, a single consideration absorbed his thought: it was that Tchong-yang-eul would inherit some day a part of the property of his father. There was the true motive which prevented him from recognizing the child as his brother. To begin with, he sought revenge by calumny and scandal; later he went so far as to maltreat the son and the mother.

The governor, whose knowledge and penetration had led him to the most eminent offices, did not take the trouble to fathom the secret springs of this conduct. Unfortunately, he felt each day the progress of the years, and he feared that he would not live until Tchong-yang-eul should have attained his majority. "When I am no longer there," he said, "this child will fall beneath the power of his elder brother. If I treat the latter with all the severity that he merits, it will furnish him later a thousand pretexts of animosity and vengeance against my second son; it will be better to use patience and tact."

If the sight of the young child always caused a redoubling of tenderness to the father, he could not defend himself from a feeling of pity in seeing its mother, so weak and timid, who would soon find herself without support. This idea was present to him without ceasing, and induced in him regrets the most bitter and grief and despair.

Four springs passed, and the child reached its fifth year. The old man, seeing that he was endowed with rare intelligence, and that, at the same time, he loved to play and frolic, thought of sending him to school in order that he might acquire by solid studies ability and reputation. Since the elder brother bore the name of Chen-k'i, he wished to call this one Chen-chu, an expression signifying also 'worthy successor of his father.'

He chose a fortunate day, prepared a collation, and ordered Chen-chu to go invite the master destined to give him lessons.

Now this master was the same to whom the governor had confided the education of his grandchild. Henceforth the young uncle and the nephew should have together the same teacher, one stone making, according to the proverb, two blows.

Who could have expected that Ni-chen-k'i would agree with his father? Seeing that the young child had been surnamed Chen-chu, an expression which put him in the same line as himself, he experienced the greatest discontent. "Furthermore," said he to himself, "since my son is studying with Chen-chu, must he not call him uncle? This title, fortified by long habit, will inspire in him a sentiment of superiority which may result in

tyranny. It will be better to withdraw my son from the school and to give him another master."

Accordingly, he would seek out his son, under the pretext of the latter's being sick, and often make him absent himself from the class for several days together.

At first, the governor supposed that his grandson had in fact a real illness; but at the end of some time, the master informed him that Ni-chen-k'i had found another teacher for his son, and that thus the two children were attending separate schools. He added that he could not divine the motive for such a change.

This affair would have had no unfortunate consequence if the old man had not known of it. But at these tidings he fell into a violent rage. He wished at first to go seek his son and make him explain his conduct. But, after some instants of reflection, he said: "Since heaven has given me a son so perverse and unnatural, of what use is it to reproach him? It will be wiser not to concern myself with him."

The governor returned home, his soul overwhelmed with grief. In his trouble, he stumbled over the sill of the door and fell backwards. Meï-chi ran to help him up and led him to a couch; he had lost his senses. Forthwith she called a skilled physician, who, after having felt the pulse of the old man, declared that he was suffering from fever. He bathed the patient's face with warm water to call back his senses, and caused him to be carried to his bed.

Although the old man had regained conciousness, he was paralyzed in all his members and could not make the slightest movement. Meï-chi would not leave his pillow. Now she caused to be heated bouillions, now she prepared prescribed potions, and rendered to her husband all the services which her tenderness could suggest.

When the old man had taken many medicines without any improvement in his condition, the doctor opened a vein; then he announced that his art could do no more, and that the sick man had but two days left to live.

At this news, Ni-chen-k'i came several times to look upon the patient and to assure himself of the truth of what the physician had said; and, seeing that the state of the old man grew worse from hour to hour, he became convinced that he would never recover from this sickness. Accordingly, he began to raise a disturbance in the house, to scold the servants, to strike the valets, and to pack up the effects of his father. The old man perceived this, and the grief that he felt shortened his days. The young wife did not cease to weep and to tremble. The child went no longer to his classes, but remained in the room to watch his father.

The governor, feeling that his end was approaching, called to him his older son and taking a list which contained the deeds to his lands and his houses and the names of all those attached to his service, handed it to

him and said: "Chen-chu is but five years of age; it is necessary that some one should be concerned with his upbringing. His mother is too young to administer my household; if I give her a part of my fortune, she will not know how to regulate its use. I prefer, therefore, to make you my heir. If Chen-chu attains manhood, I pray you to stand toward him as a father. You will seek for him a mate, and you will give him a little house and five or six acres of good land in order that he may be protected from hunger and cold and may provide for all his needs. These different recommendations are detailed from point to point in the book I hand you. As to whether you wish to live together or apart, that is a question which I leave to your choice. If Meï-chi wishes to form some new attachment, let her follow her inclination. If, on the other hand, she persists in remaining a widow and in passing her days with her son, exercise no constraint to prevent her. When I am no more, execute promptly my last wishes. By so doing, you will display your filial piety. Then I shall be able to repose in peace in the dark empire."

Ni-chen-k'i took the book and at the first glance he saw clearly expounded all the details of the inheritance. His face brightened and with a radiant air he said: "My father, have no fear, no inquietude. I will discharge with religious zeal all the orders which you have just given me."

Without losing time, he picked up the book and left, leaping with joy.

Meï-chi, seeing him already at a distance, began to sob and burst into tears. Then, showing her son to the old man, she said: "This child whom you are treating like an enemy, is he not your legitimate offspring? Is he not of your blood, a portion of yourself? and yet you abandon to your elder son the possession of all your property? How do you expect your son and me to live for the rest of our days?"

"You do not understand the true motive for my conduct," replied the governor. "Seeing that Chen-k'i is a man without principles or loyalty, I have thought that if I divided my fortune equally between my two sons, the life of this tender child would be exposed to the greatest dangers. I have preferred to satisfy Chen-k'i, to abandon to him the inheritance of all my goods, in order that in the end you should have nothing to fear from his jealousy and inveterate hatred."

"However that may be," replied Meï-chi, "you know the old axiom: that a son, whether he be born of a wife of the first or of the second rank, is always a son. If, therefore, a father allows himself to be blinded by partiality, and gives all to one at the expense of the other, he cannot escape being treated with scorn."

"These observations," said the governor, "will not change in the least my intention; I have my reasons for acting thus. Profit by the time while I am still alive to put your son under the tutelage of Chen-k'i; and sooner or later, when I am no more, choose a husband according to your heart with whom you may finish happily the remainder of your

days. But be sure not to remain with my sons; they will cause you continual distress."

"What words have escaped from your lips?" cried Mei-chi. "Your servant belongs to a well-bred family; she would reject to the end of her life the thought of forming a new alliance. Furthermore, have I not a son to whom I owe myself wholly? Have I a heart hard enough to detach myself from him?"

"Can it be," continued the governor, "that you are firmly decided to remain always a widow? Do you not fear that you will soon repent such a decision?"

Meï-chi sealed by a vow the resolve that she had just expressed.

"Ah, well!" said the governor, "since your resolution is not to be broken, have no worry as to your future and that of your son: your existence is assured."

At these words, he sought beneath his pillow, and withdrew an object which he handed to Meï-chi. At first, she thought it to be a rolled manuscript, which contained the gift of some portion of his wealth. But, at a second glance, she recognized that it was a painting, a foot wide and three feet long.

"What do you wish that I do with this painting?" cried Meï-chi.

"It is a family portrait,' replied the governor; "it conceals a mystery of the highest importance. Keep this painting religiously, and above all refrain from showing it to any one. But when your son has grown up, if Chen-k'i gives him no sign of interest, hide your secret within your heart and wait until there is pointed out to you a wise magistrate, honest and clear-sighted. You will present to him this painting and after having informed him of my last wishes in the matter, you will beg him to give you the solution of the enigma here contained. The desired explanation will naturally come to his mind, and immediately you will find the means of living, you and your son, and you will even procure all the blessings of fortune."

Meï-chi took and concealed the painting, to which we will return ere long.

The governor lived several days more. His tender wife received his last sigh, breathed out in the midst of a slow agony. He died at the age of eighty-four.

"Heaven gives us a portion of existence; we expend it in a hundred different fashions. But one day or another death arrives and makes all our projects vanish."

Let us now return to Ni-Chen-k'i. Seeing himself in possession of the book containing the deeds of the property of his father, he demanded the keys of all the apartments. Then each day he examined the various furnishings and made in advance his inventory. How could he have had time to go to his father to inform himself of the sick man's condition?

But when that father had uttered his last sigh, Meï-Chi sent a servant to bear him the sad news. Ni-chen-k'i and his wife ran in all haste, and after having scarcely expressed their regret, they returned home at the end of half an hour, leaving to Meï-chi the care of watching over the remains of her lord.

Happily, before their arrival, she had herself prepared everything necessary for the funeral. After having enveloped the body of her husband with his last vestments, and placed it in its coffin, she assumed the garb of a widow, and remained with her son to protect the funeral hall. From morning until night she wept and sobbed and never for an instant left the bier, which she fondly embraced.

Chen-k'i occupied himself only with making and receiving visits; as for mourning and grief, he remained a complete stranger to them. He selected a day of the same week in order to celebrate the obsequies. Scarcely had the sad ceremony been concluded than he went to the room of Meï-chi, overturned the coffers, and hunted through the boxes, fearing, no doubt, that his father might have left there some money as a result of his economies.

Meï-chi, endowed with great penetration, was fearful lest he should discover the painting. She took two small caskets which she had brought to the household, opened the first, and after having withdrawn certain ancient garments, she engaged Chen-k'i and his wife in examining them. Chen-k'i, seeing their little worth, renounced his intention of pushing further his researches. Finally, he and his wife withdrew, leaving the house in complete disorder. Meï-chi, overwhelmed with a thousand sad thoughts, did not cease to utter cries and sobs. The young child, witness of the despair of his mother, mingled his tears with hers, and gave vent to heart rending lamentations.

If one were as insensible as a statue of clay, how could he restrain his tears? If one had a heart of marble, how could he defend himself from a feeling of compassion?

The next day, Ni-chen-k'i sent for a carpenter, visited with him the room of the governor, and ordered him to reconstruct it for the uses of the new owner's son. As for Meï-chi and her young child, he sent them to a distance, to a dilapidated house situated at the rear of a garden, and gave them as furnishings only a poor pallet mounted on four shaky legs, a table of rude planks, and some worm-eaten stools. But he provided them with no kitchen utensils.

At first, Meï-chi remained in her room and did nothing but give orders to the two persons who served them. Then she dismissed the elder and retained only the younger, who was eleven or twelve years of age. This girl, deeply attached to her mistress, went each day from house to house begging rice and herbs suitable for soup, and sacrificing herself to the point of forgetting her own needs.

Meï-chi could not permit such abnegation, and, overcoming her natural timidity, she went about herself asking the rice which was necessary and constructing a little oven of earth and preparing their modest repasts. From morning to evening, and during a part of the night, she labored with her needle, and, with the product of these vigils, she purchased the cheapest vegetables, which were almost her sole food. Her young son attended the classes of a neighboring schoolmaster, and it was needful for her to pay in addition the cost of this education.

Many times Chen-k'i ordered his wife to persuade Meï-chi to contract a second union, and he even sent to her marriage brokers to manage such an affair. But, seeing that the resistance of Meï-chi was invincible, he ceased to trouble her.

Inasmuch as Meï-chi was endowed with a patient and resigned nature, and bore all things without murmuring, Chen-k'i, although violent and hot-headed by disposition, at length paid no attention to her or to her son. But the time passed with rapidity of the arrow which cuts the air. Chen-chu grew insensibly and attained his fourteenth year. Now, Meï-chi had always maintained the greatest reserve concerning what had passed, and had abstained from making the least allusion to it in the presence of her son. She feared that he might commit some indiscretion, which would reawaken against her the animosity of Ni-chen-k'i. But her son was now fourteen years of age, and his mind had already acquired such keenness that it became impossible to hide from him longer the truth.

One day, he begged his mother to buy for him a garment of silk. She replied that she had no money.

"My father," replied Chen-chu, "once exercised the functions of governor, and he left but two children. Behold now the brilliant position of my elder brother: he is favored with honors and riches; and I, I cannot even procure a garment for which I have need. What is the meaning of this shocking inequality? Well, mother, since you lack money, I will go and ask it of my brother."

So saying, he departed; Meï-chi ran after him and held him by his coat: "My son," said she to him, "is a garment of such importance that you would purchase it by an act of humiliation? You know the proverb 'Happiness is like a treasure; you increase it by taking care of it.' So long as you are still young, I dress you in common stuff, but when you are grown you shall have garments of silk. If I were to do the opposite to-day, and to clothe you in silk, I should not have even ordinary cloth with which to dress you later on. Wait two years more, and, if you have made progress in your studies, I shall not hesitate to sell something in order to procure you fine garments. It is not well to irritate your elder brother; I beg you, refrain from provoking his wrath."

"You are right," replied Chen-chu.

But these words were not sincere, and his heart was far from speaking in accord with his lips.

"I know," said he to himself, "that my father had much gold and silver and a vast domain; he must have divided these things equally between us two. Can it be supposed that I shall remain forever with my mother and marry only at the end of my career? Is it necessary that I should abandon my studies, and, in order to live, that I should be reduced to exercise the meanest of professions? On the one hand, my elder brother, who lives in opulence, shows me no sign of interest; on the other hand, my mother cannot procure a piece of cloth and awaits the moment to sell something to give me garments. The language that she has used to me suggests a mystery. Moreover, my elder brother is not a tiger to devour men; what have I to fear from him?"

After saying these words, he went forth secretly and proceeded to the magnificent mansion occupied by his elder brother. He asked for his brother, and, on perceiving him, made him a deep salutation.

"What are you doing here?" cried Chen-k'i, struck with astonishment.

"All the world knows," retorted Chen-chu, "that I am the son of an illustrious magistrate; nevertheless, I am covered with rags, and I incite the contempt of the public. I have come expressly to ask of you a piece of silk in order that I may wear a worthy garment."

"If you wish clothing, you have only to ask it of your mother."

"The possessions of Lord Ni, our father, are enjoyed, not by my mother, but by you."

On hearing these words, which appeared more mature than the speaker's age, Chen-k'i became flushed with wrath. "Who is it that has so sharpened your tongue? Who has incited you to come and ask clothing of me in order to have a pretext to quarrel with me concerning my wealth?"

"Sooner or later that wealth will be divided. But it is not that which concerns me to-day. For the moment, I ask only the garments which correspond to my rank and my birth."

"It is well for you, little bastard, to speak of rank and birth! If Lord Ni, my father, has left immense treasure, has he not, to divide it, a son and a grandson born of legitimate wives? As for you, whose birth is more than questionable, you have nothing to do here: get out! I know full well that you have not come here of your own will. Some one has sent you to make this scandalous scene. But be careful that I do not forget myself. I shall know how to expel you, you and your mother, from the retreat that I have so generously accorded to you, and to reduce you to the condition of not knowing where to lay your head."

"I am, like you, the son of the governor. Why raise doubts as to the legitimacy of my birth? What do you mean by forgetting yourself? Have you formed a project of shortening my days in order to be able to dispose alone of the inheritance?"

"Little beast!" cried Chen-k'i, his eyes flashing with wrath. "You wish then to push my patience beyond bounds?"

At these words, he caught Chen-chu by his coat, shook him with violence, and overwhelmed him with a rain of blows.

The poor child, bruised and covered with contusions, barely escaped, and ran weeping to recount his misadventure to his mother.

"I forbade you," said Meï-chi, displeased, "to go and provoke his wrath. You have been deaf to my counsels. He has misused you; and it serves you right."

In saying these words, the good mother took the skirt of her robe and rubbed gently the wounds with which the boy's head was covered. But, at the sight of these wounds, two streams of tears escaped from her eyes.

"A young widow embraces her orphan son. Deprived of all resources, she can scarcely guard him from hunger and from cold. Because she has lost the sole friend that she had in the world, she beholds withering far from the parent trunk two branches which should have flowered together."

Meï-chi was overwhelmed with a thousand unhappy thoughts. Fearing lest Chen-k'i should keep his resentment, she dispatched to him the young girl who served her, in order to beg him to excuse the folly of a schoolboy, who, ignorant of the ways of the world, had imprudently offended his elder brother and provoked his severity.

But the wrath of Chen-k'i was far from being appeased. The next day, he called together all the members of his family, without forgetting Meï-chi and her son, in order to make them aware of the last wishes of his father.

"Respectable relatives whom I see here assembled," said he to them, "I assure you that any one but I would not have deigned to have provided at his own expense for this creature and her son. Yesterday, Chen-chu came to dispute with me the right to my goods, and has allowed himself to utter insults which I have been obliged to check for fear that, later, age would but augment his demands and his quarrelsome disposition. To-day I am about to give to the son and to the mother a dwelling and seven or eight acres of land; and in doing this, I am only conforming to the will of my father, which I wish to execute with religious care. Approach, respectable relatives, and confirm by your own eyes the truth as I tell it to you."

The relatives, who had long known the violent character of Chen-k'i, and who furthermore saw that the testament was indeed written by the hand of the governor, were careful not to contradict Chen-k'i for fear of drawing down upon themselves his ill-will.

"With a thousand pieces of gold," said those who wished to stand in his good graces, "one could not procure the signature of a man already dead. Yes, we recognize fully the hand of the governor, there can not be the least doubt upon that point."

Even those most affected by the misfortunes of Chen-chu and his

mother dared not raise their voices in their favor. "Are there many men," said they, "who have every day enough to provide for their needs? Are there many women who can marry with a dowry and a trousseau? Now these two at least possess a dwelling and land which have cost them nothing. They will only need courage and good-will to make this property worth something. Not only will they have all the rice they wish, but they will be able to have more and to sell it to advantage."

Meï-chi, who had already been relegated to a corner of the garden, knew perfectly the worth of the gifts of Chen-k'i. But it was necessary to obey and to accept his division. She led away her son, saluting her relatives and taking farewell of them, after having prostrated herself before the book of her husband.

Chen-k'i and his wife relinquished to her some old kitchen utensils as well as the two caskets which she had brought with her. Meï-chi hired a beast of burden, and transported these things to the habitation of which mention has just been made. She perceived here only land overrun with wild weeds and a house ill-built and covered with a few tiles, and long in disrepair. How could she inhabit a cabin with a roof leaking everywhere and a floor dampened always by the humidity of the earth?

Meï-chi swept out a room and set up there a bed. Then she called a farmer, from whom she learned that these seven or eight acres were composed of land of the poorest quality. In the years of abundance they gave only half a harvest, which would not suffice to feed the one who cultivated them; but in bad seasons, one could expect to subsist only as the result of borrowings and sacrifices.

As Meï-chi did not cease to weep, the young scholar, who was endowed with a precocious mind, spoke to her in these terms: "My brother and I are sons of the same father. Why should the will have treated me with such shocking parsimony? There must be involved some secret thus far unknown to me. Is it not possible, for example, that this instrument is false, and that my father, to whom it is ascribed, was altogether a stranger to its writing? You know that in matters of inheritance, justice does not respect the person and has no concern with the illustriousness or the obscurity of the individual. Why not, my mother, go find a magistrate to whom you can make known this revolting inequality? His decision will affirm our rights and end our just regrets."

Meï-chi, seeing herself importuned without ceasing by her son, could no longer keep the secret that she had concealed so many years within her breast.

"My son," said she, "beware of doubting the authenticity of the will. It is true indeed that the governor wrote it from beginning to end with his own hand. Beholding you at a tender age and fearing that your elder brother might plot against your life, he preferred, in order to satisfy the avidity of that brother, to make him his sole heir; but on the eve of your

father's death, he confided to me a painting and recommended that I keep it hidden. 'It contains,' added he, 'a mystery of the highest importance. Wait until there is pointed out to you a wise magistrate endowed with rare intelligence. You will go to him and ask him for an explanation. I promise that you and your son will thereafter have the means of living in happy ease and that until the end of your days you will no longer need to suffer the rigors of poverty.'"

"In view of all this," replied Chen-chu, "why have you not advised me sooner? Where is this painting? I pray you, allow your son to cast his eyes upon it for a moment."

Mei-chi opened the casket and drew forth from it a packet covered with cloth. Under the first envelope there was another of varnished paper. After having removed this with care, she unrolled the painting and spread it out upon a chair. Then, with her son, prostrating her face to the earth, she cried, speaking to the picture: "In a village hut it is not easy to provide a chapel! I beg you to excuse me that I am unable to render to you all the honors that are your due!"

Chen-chu, having finished his pious salutations, rose to examine the painting with the keenest attention. He beheld a personage seated, clad in dark crêpe, his locks white as the snow, and his features so lifelike in expression that they might doubt if this were a painting or an actual man. In one hand he held a young child whom he pressed against his breast. With the other, which pointed downward, he seemed to indicate the earth.

The son and the mother reasoned together a long time regarding the painting, without being able to resolve the enigma. At last, weary of questions and conjectures, they were obliged to return it to its envelope. This fruitless endeavor to solve the mystery filled their souls with chagrin and discouragement.

Some days later, Chen-chu went to the neighboring town to seek an able master who might give him the desired explanation. All at once, in passing before the temple of Kouan-in, he perceived a band of villagers bearing a pig and a sheep that they were about to offer in sacrifice in order to propitiate the divinity adored in that place.

Chen-chu stopped, and, lifting his eyes, he perceived an old man, who, leaning upon a bamboo stick, approached the band and asked the reason for the sacrifice that they were about to offer. One of them said: "We trembled beneath the weight of a false accusation, which might have led to capital punishment. Fortunately, a magistrate of this town, who is a man of extraordinary sagacity, has penetrated the secret of this affair, and has restored us to life. To begin with, we had made a vow to the divinity called Kouan-in. To-day, since our prayer has been heard, we come to fulfill our vow in all solemnity."

"What was this calumnious accusation," demanded the old man, "and

in what fashion has the magistrate recognized the injustice of which you were the victims and made clear your innocence?"

"The prefect of the town," replied a man of the band, "had, according to the order of the prince, commanded from ten houses a certain number of suits of armor. I, who am called Tching-ta, I was the director of this enterprise. Among my fellows there was a tailor named Tchao; he was the most skilful worker of all the region. Often he left his home to go to work in the city, and sometimes he would remain away for several days. One day he left and did not return though more than a month had passed. Lieou-chi, his wife, sent in all directions to learn his whereabouts; but some time after his disappearance, the Yellow River cast up upon its banks a corpse the head of which had been crushed. The folk of the countryside having made their declaration to the magistrate of the neighborhood, one among them recognized that the body was that of the tailor Tchao.

"On the eve of the day on which he left his house, we had had, while together, a little altercation. In the heat of the dispute, I entered his house and broke certain objects of small value. That is really all that happened. Who would have thought that his wife would impute to me this murder?

"The prefect of the town, who was named Tsi (he to whom the present prefect has succeeded), believed the accusation, and condemned me to capital punishment. On the pretext that my comrades had not denounced me, he treated them as my accomplices, and included them in the same condemnation. Having been deprived of the right of justifying ourselves and proving our innocence, we remained in prison cells for three whole years. Happily, heaven wished that the cruel magistrate should be replaced by Lord Teng.

"Although he obtained his position by a contest in the province, he is a man of cultivation and the rarest penetration of mind. One day, he came to visit us in prison, in order to examine with deliberation the crime with which we were charged. He listened to us with extreme good-will, and, touched by our tears and the apparent truth of our recital, he commenced to doubt our guilt.

"'I am convinced!' cried he, 'that an altercation at table between comrades could not have excited a hatred deep enough to incite a man to slay his friend.'

"Having heeded our complaint, the magistrate issued an order against the persons whom we indicated to him as the true authors of the crime, in order to submit the affair to a fresh trial.

"Lord Teng, perceiving that the wife of the tailor Tchao would not make a deposition, took upon himself to interrogate her, and asked if she had proceeded to a second marriage. Lieou-chi replied that, being without fortune, it had been impossible for her to remain a widow and that already she had taken another husband.

"'What man have you married?' demanded the magistrate.

"'A workman of the same profession as Tchao, a tailor called Chin-pan-han.'

"Lord Teng caused him to be brought forthwith and asked him how long he had been married to this woman.

"'It was,' replied he, 'a month and more after she became a widow that I married her.'

"'What person acted in this affair as the marriage broker? What wedding presents did you offer him?'

"'During the life of Tchao, he borrowed from your servant seven or eight ounces of silver. As soon as I heard of his death, I went to his widow and urged her to repay me the sum. But Lieou-chi, being unable to pay, begged me to take her as wife to the end that she might thus discharge the debt of her husband. To tell the truth, I have had no need of a marriage broker.'

"'How,' said Lord Teng to him, 'how could an ordinary workman amass so considerable a sum as seven or eight ounces of silver?'

"'It was,' replied Pa-han, 'the fruit of my savings during long years.'

"Lord Teng ordered him to take paper and brush and to figure up the account of the different sums that he had successively loaned, and which formed the total of the debt in question.

"Pa-han soon finished the bill, which was composed of thirty items, the total amounting to seven ounces and eight pence.

"But scarcely had the magistrate cast his eye upon it than he cried with a terrible voice: 'You are the murderer of Tchao! How could you dare calumniate an innocent man?'

"In saying these words, he made a sign to the officers of justice. These, prompt as the lightning, seized the fellow, stretched him on the ground with his stomach downward, and applied the bastinado.

"Since Pa-han continued to refuse to avow his crime, Lord Teng said to him: 'I have discovered your imposture; inasmuch as you have loaned your capital, it is just that you should receive interest. Could you not have divided your funds and confided them in equal parts to several persons? If you loaned the whole sum to the tailor, it is without doubt because you had formed with his wife a guilty alliance. In order to pocket your money, Tchao connived with her and closed his eyes upon your intrigue. Later, being impatient to live together as man and wife, you planned his death, and it is you who have been the instrument of the crime. Furthermore, you have moved Lieou-chi to accuse Tching-ta as the murderer of her husband. The writing of the account that you have just prepared beneath my eyes is exactly the same as that of the accusation; this resemblance confirms my belief. Who can be the assassin of Tchao if not you?'

"The magistrate caused to be brought the wife and ordered that her fingers be bound and twisted that he might extort from her a confession of the crime.

"Suddenly Lieou-chi changed color and became as pale as the guardian of the dark empire. Moved beyond herself, she could not resist the pain of the torture and allowed the confession demanded of her to escape. Pa-han saw himself obliged to follow her example.

"Now it should be known that Pa-han had for a long time enjoyed secret relations with Lieou-chi without their conduct's awakening the least suspicion. Later, their meetings had become more frequent and more intimate. Tchao, perceiving these, and fearing to be a butt of public laughter, had formed the project of separating from her.

"Pa-han, being once upon a time in close conversation with Lieou-chi, counselled her to get rid of Tchao in order that they might live together as man and wife, but she had firmly refused.

"One day, when Tchao returned from his work in the city, Pa-han conducted him adroitly to a tavern and plied him with drink. Then he led him to the shores of the Yellow River, and after having crushed his head with a stone, he threw the body into the stream, where it sank and disappeared.

"When Pa-han believed the affair to be sufficiently forgotten, he asked the widow in marriage, and came to dwell with her in the house of the defunct. Some time after, the body came to the surface and was recognized by many persons.

"Pa-han, having learned that I had had an altercation with Tchao on the eve of the day of his disappearance, urged his wife to formulate a complaint and to throw suspicion for the murder upon me.

"It was only some time after the celebration of the marriage that she knew that Pa-han had taken the life of her husband, but, being married to him, she did not dare to denounce him to justice.

"Lord Teng, having discovered the true culprits, made them suffer the punishment that they so well merited, and pronounced our acquittal.

"These people whom you see are our relatives and neighbors, who have collected among them a subscription to offer a sacrifice and to thank heaven for our deliverance. Tell me, venerable sir, if one can find another such example of wickedness?"

"It is still more difficult," said the old man, "to find a magistrate endowed with such wisdom and marvellous penetration. The inhabitants of our city should esteem themselves happy to possess him."

After having listened attentively to this story, Chen-chu sought out his mother and recounted to her the affair in all its details. "Since we have," said he to her, "so able a magistrate, why do we hesitate to go and present to him the painting, and to explain to him all the circumstances attending it?"

After having given up their own efforts to solve the mystery, they informed themselves of the magistrate's audience day. Meï-chi rose early in the morning, ordered her son of fourteen to carry the painting and

presented herself at the foot of the judgment seat, uttering cries as if demanding justice.

The magistrate, seeing, instead of a petition, that she held a little painting, could not refrain from expressing his astonishment.

Meï-chi, pressed to explain, exposed in the greatest detail the conduct of Ni-chen-k'i regarding her, and concluded her deposition by repeating the recommendations that the governor had given her before dying in regard to the painting held between her hands.

The magistrate took the painting and ordered her to withdraw until he had examined it with all necessary attention.

"A portrait conceals an important mystery. On the discovery of this secret depends the possession of an immense fortune. To save from indigence a young widow and her orphan son, a magistrate, endowed with divine penetration, employs all the resources of his heart and mind."

Meï-chi and her son returned home.

But let us now speak of Lord Teng. Scarcely was the audience concluded, when he retired in haste and locked himself in his room to examine the painting. He recognized that it was a family portrait representing the governor. By one hand he held a young child which he pressed against his breast. The other was pointed toward the earth.

After having reflected for part of the day, he cried: "It is evident that this personage is the governor, and that the young child is Chen-chu. In pointing with his finger at the earth, does he not seem to indicate that he desires that a magistrate should penetrate the sentiments which, in the other world, occupy his paternal heart, and become the support and protector of this tender orphan?"

"Nevertheless," said he to himself, "since there exists a will in the hand of the testator himself, this affair does not fall within my jurisdiction; the last wishes of the deceased should be observed by the law. In any case, the governor has declared that this painting conceals an important mystery; he must have had sound reasons for speaking thus. As for myself, if I do not clear up this affair, I will forever compromise my reputation."

Each day on leaving his courtroom, he took the painting; he amused himself in examining it for hours together, and exhausted himself in vain conjectures. Many days passed thus without his being able to solve the enigma which tormented him day and night.

But heaven had decided that the explanation so impatiently desired should present itself, and soon an accident sufficiently commonplace revealed the secret which had hitherto baffled every effort.

One afternoon, Lord Teng had gone out upon his terrace in order to examine this painting, and while looking at it he ordered that tea should be served. As he made a step forward to receive the cup when it was presented to him, he struck his foot against the table and upset a part of

the tea upon the painting. Laying aside the cup, he took the painting in both hands intending to hang it to the balustrade of the staircase in order that it might dry in the heat of the sun. Suddenly a ray of sunlight illumined the damp painting, the paper became transparent, and revealed between two leaves placed one above the other, several perpendicular lines which resembled writing. The magistrate was all at once enlightened. Forthwith, he separated the two leaves of paper and found, beneath the surface painting, a sheet written in the hand of the governor, and containing the following directions:

"I, who write these lines, have for five times filled high administrative positions. I am more than eighty years of age, and from day to day I am expecting to leave this life; I will leave it without regret. Chen-chu, the son of my second wife, has just attained his first birthday, and I have not yet had time to render legitimate his birth and to assure his rights. On the one hand, Chen-k'i, the son of my first wife, is altogether devoid of filial piety toward me and of attachment toward his young brother. I fear even that in time to come he may attempt his life. The two great mansions that I have recently bought and all my country estates I abandon to my elder son as a heritage, with the exception of a little hut at the left of my residence. I wish that this may descend to Chen-chu.

"Although this house is very small, it is not without worth. I have hidden there beneath the floor near the wall at the left five thousand ounces of silver contained in five earthen vases; and near the wall at the right an equal sum and a thousand pieces of gold distributed in five other vases. This total sum is equivalent to the value of the property that I have devised to Ni-chen-k'i.

"If in the future Chen-chu should meet a wise and clear-sighted magistrate who will render a decision conformable to the will which I here express, he will offer him the thousand pieces of gold as a witness of his gratitude.

"I, the old governor Ni, have written these directions with my own hand: such a year, such a month, such a day, signed with my own seal."

Now, the family portrait had been executed by the governor's order at the period in which he had just entered upon his eightieth year, and in which his young son had just completed his first twelve months.

As soon as Lord Teng had seen that there was a question here of a thousand pieces of gold, he could not refrain from feeling a secret joy in thinking that this sum would be the recompence of his cleverness and sagacity. He was, as we have seen, a witty and subtle man capable of inventing the most happy stratagems. He paused, and, knitting his brows, he collected and weighed carefully the different ideas which thronged to his mind.

His plan being soon formed, he sent privately a person to Chen-k'i to invite him to come hither. "I wish," added he, "to give him news of an affair that will interest him."

You should know that Ni-chen-k'i, who was in possession of all the wealth of his father, thought of nothing but inventing each day new pleasures and passing his life in the midst of delights such as luxury and fortune could afford him.

As soon as he perceived that the messenger bore a written order signed by the first magistrate of the city, he left at once and presented himself at the prefecture.

At that moment, Lord Teng had just come to his courtroom, where several important affairs called him. The messenger having announced to him the arrival of Ni-chen-k'i, he ordered the latter to be brought before him.

"Are you not," asked he, "the elder son of governor Ni?"

"Yes, my lord, I am."

"Meï-chi, your stepmother, has filed a complaint with me accusing you of having driven her out with her son, and of having yourself assumed all the property of the governor. What have you to say to this?"

"My young brother, Chen-chu, born of a second wife, remained with me during many years. From his earliest infancy until this day, I have reared him with the greatest care, and I have been to him as a father. During these latter days, the mother and the son have desired to leave me and to set up a separate domicile, but it is unjust to say that I have driven them forth. As for the division of the paternal estate, it is founded upon a will written in his own hand by the governor and delivered to me on the eve of his death. Your servant would never have dared disobey his last wishes."

"Where is this will in your father's hand?"

"It is at home. If you will permit me to go seek it, I will hasten to place it before you."

"The accusation states that the inheritance left by the governor amounts to ten thousand ounces of silver: that is not a small sum. Moreover, who knows if this document is really authentic? But, as you are the son of a magistrate, one should respect you. To-morrow, I will cause Meï-chi and her son to be called, and I will myself go to visit you at your home. If the division has been made unequally, justice will prevail. No special interest will be allowed to influence my decision."

Then, with a severe tone, he ordered an officer of the court to make Chen-k'i withdraw, and to conduct him home, and then to go next and warn Mei-chi and her son to the end that they might come the following day to hear the decision that they had requested.

On the way, the officer, won over by the presents of Ni-chen-k'i, forgot the mandate that he had received, and let him go in peace. As for himself, he proceeded to the hut occupied by Meï-chi and her son, and gave them the order of Lord Teng. Chen-k'i was struck by the firm and severe tone of the magistrate's summons, and withdrew trembling, in the fear that he must submit every detail of the succession to a rigorous examination. In-

deed, his father's property had not been equitably shared. He had held strictly to the letter of the will only regarding himself, and had treated his mother and his younger brother with unexampled parsimony.

In order to justify his conduct and to support it by imposing authority, he felt the need of the testimony of his relatives and friends whom he had already earlier assembled for the same object. That evening, he sent them large sums of money and invited them urgently to come to him without fail next morning, adding that if the magistrate should question them concerning the will, he would beg them to sustain him with all their power.

Now, since the death of the governor, no one among these relatives and friends had been admitted to the table of Chen-k'i; but upon receiving these packets containing ounces of silver, they could not refrain from recalling the proverb: "When all goes well, man neglects the gods and burns no incense in their honor, but, at the first danger, he becomes devout and embraces the feet of their statues."

Each one of them, laughing within himself, profited by this good fortune to make various purchases according to his fancy, resolving to examine on the morrow the turn that affairs might take and to conduct himself accordingly.

"An elder son ordinarily permits himself to be guided by his own interest, but, if he should have for stepmother a second wife, let him refrain from treating her with tryannic severity. To-day Chen-k'i buys the support of his relatives and friends at the cost of much gold. Would it not have been better for him earlier to have given a garment of silk to the young orphan?"

As soon as Meï-chi had seen the messenger and become aware of the order which he bore, she perceived that Lord Teng had recognized her complaint and was about to become her supporter. The next day she arose early and went to the prefecture to visit him.

"I am touched by your misfortunes and those of your son," he said to her with kindness; "rest assured that I will employ all my power to do you justice. But I have learned that Chen-k'i possesses a will in the governor's own hand. Tell me, I pray you, whether that document is indeed authentic."

"It is indeed true," replied Meï-chi, "that the will is written wholly in the hand of the governor, but that act is far from being the free expression of his sentiments and desires. His whole aim was to preserve his young son from certain death. You may convince yourself easily, generous magistrate, if you will examine the book which contains the schedule and deeds of all the property of the governor."

"You know the proverb," replied Lord Teng: "'For an honest magistrate it is a difficult and delicate task to divide an inheritance.' For the present, I can assure you that, during the remainder of your days, you and your son will have an abundance of all that is necessary for your subsistence. But do not conceive too great hopes."

"Lord," replied Meï-chi, "so long as my son and I are protected from hunger and cold, we will be quite satisfied. We have no ambition to equal Ni-chen-k'i, nor to rival him in luxury and opulence."

Lord Teng then prayed Meï-chi and her son to go and await him in the house of Chen-k'i.

The latter had arranged his reception hall with every comfort, and had placed there an armchair covered with a tiger's skin, and a casket exhaling the most exquisite perfumes. Without losing time, he had sent for his relatives and friends, who were joined by Meï-chi and her son. As soon as he saw them assembled, he proceeded to salute them one after another, slipping to each one some flattering words in order to engage their support.

Although Chen-k'i had his heart swollen with spite and anger, he knew how to disguise and restrain beneath a laughing exterior the feelings which agitated him. Each one prepared in advance the compliment he would address to the magistrate. They had not long to wait.

Suddenly there was heard in the distance a sound of confused voices. It was easy to understand that Lord Teng had arrived.

Chen-k'i arranged his cloak and his turban, and prepared to receive him. Those among the relatives who were the eldest and who were accustomed to good society awaited the magistrate with a grave and respectful mien. The youngest, easily frightened, stood up or went on tip-toe to the door, and allowed their gaze to travel afar, showing signs of impatience and fear.

Soon they perceived two bailiffs of the tribunal who walked behind the sedan chair and with great parasols of blue silk shaded the governor, whose prudence and intelligence were about to be so signally shown. Arrived before the house of Ni-chen-k'i, the two bailiffs kneeled and uttered a loud cry. In the twinkling of an eye, Meï-chi and all those of the house of Ni-chen-k'i fell upon their knees and remained motionless in this attitude in order to receive the magistrate.

The doorkeeper advanced; at his command the porters stopped, and set down the chair whose latticed blinds were ornamented with rich paintings.

Lord Teng, setting foot to earth, walked toward the house with grave and measured steps. Suddenly he halted, and, looking aloft, made profound salutations and articulated distinctly several responses as if he spoke to a host who had come before him. The assembly was struck with amazement, and observed his extraordinary gestures and all his movements with mute immobility. Then he advanced and, continuing his salutations, walked straight into the reception hall.

There he repeated the same ceremonies, and pronounced a long series of phrases of which no one could grasp the meaning. At first, he turned towards the arm-chair covered with tiger skin, which was placed at the

south, and made a salutation as if he saw some one seated therein. Then he turned, took another chair, and placed it at the north, where the master of the house might occupy it. He paused, looked above, and several times bowed in a respectful manner. Then he proceeded to seat himself upon the chair that had been reserved for him.

All the assembly having observed these gestures and movements, which seemed to announce that he was speaking to a god or to a soul from the other world, dared not make a step in advance. They remained ranged in two lines looking at him with a stupefied air. Suddenly, Lord Teng bowed upon his chair, and, crossing his hands upon his breast, made a profound salutation. "Your wife," cried he, "has placed in my hands a complaint relative to your inheritance! Are the facts as there set forth true?"

He spoke, and pretended to lend an attentive ear. Then, shaking his head, and as if in consternation, he cried: "What! is it possible that your elder son should be a man so wicked?"

He gathered himself together and listened again a moment.

"Where do you wish that your second son should find the means of existence?"

He stopped, and after a pause of some minutes, he added: "What resources toward living can be afforded by this little house of which you speak?" He paused.

"I obey, I obey." Again he paused.

"I will restore this heritage to your second son. Count on me. I will supervise religiously the execution of your wishes."

At these words, he made several salutations, halted an instant, and, with the air of a man who declines, he said: "It is impossible for me to accept so rich a present." Then, listening again, "Ah, well, since you command it, I obey."

So saying, he arose, and, bowing frequently with great respect, he added: "I follow you, I follow you."

All those present regarded him with stupefaction. He marched with long steps through the hall, now to the right, now to the left. Then, stopping with emotion, he cried, "Where are you going, Lord Ni?"

"I don't see Lord Ni," exclaimed the gatekeeper.

"This prodigy is nevertheless real," retorted the magistrate. Then, causing Ni-chen-k'i to draw near, he declared: "Your illustrious father has come to receive me himself; he has seated himself close to me, and has spoken to me for an hour. I believe that you all have heard our conversation."

"Not a word," replied Chen-k'i.

"I believe that I see him still," replied the magistrate, "with his tall figure, his pale and lean cheeks, his prominent cheek-bones, his piercing eyes, his long eyebrows, his large ears, his silver beard, his cap of dark

crêpe, his black shoes, his red mantle and his golden belt. Is that indeed his portrait?"

All those present began to tremble and fell upon their knees, crying, "It is indeed he! It is indeed he!"

"How could I have been so well informed," continued Lord Teng, "if I had not seen him in person? The governor has already told me that he had two great mansions, and that at the left of this in which we are is a little hovel belonging to it. Is this circumstance exact?"

Chen-k'i could not hide the truth.

"Well," said the magistrate to him, "let us visit it together. When we are there, I will have two words to say to you."

All those present, having heard Lord Teng depict with such truth the face and the costume of the governor, were persuaded that he had indeed really appeared, and remained for some time moved with fear and consternation.

But this scene was only an adroit invention, imagined by Lord Teng. As for the truth of the picture that he had drawn, and the details of the costume, they had been suggested to him by his knowledge of the painting.

"The judgment of a wise man possesses no weight in the opinion of the wicked; only the gods and the spirits can impress one who is evil. If the magistrate had not employed this ingenious stratagem, the unnatural son would never have submitted to his decision."

Ni-chen-k'i having showed the way, the magistrate followed him, together with all the assembly, and soon they arrived at the little hovel situated to the east of the house that they had just left. It was there that the governor had once lived before he had obtained any distinction. But as soon as he had been raised to high dignity in the state and there had been necessary for him a large and richly decorated mansion, he had left this modest dwelling, converted it into a storehouse, and installed there a farmer to care for the harvests placed within it.

Lord Teng, having explored this house from one end to the other halted in the central chamber and seated himself. Then, speaking to Chen-k'i, he said: "Your father has indeed appeared to me; he has described in the greatest detail all the objects contained within the house, and has charged me to see that they are given to Chen-chu. What is your wish in this matter?"

"I bend to your wise decision," replied Chen-k'i, bowing respectfully.

Lord Teng asked from him the book containing the schedule of the inheritance, examined it with careful attention, and exclaimed again and again, "What a rich inheritance! What a rich inheritance!"

Then, having cast his eyes upon the last page of the will, he said smilingly to Ni-chen-k'i, "My lord your father has explained to me only a moment ago everything that I see written here."

"That is not possible," said the other to himself, shaking his head; "the old fellow must be day-dreaming."

The magistrate, making Chen-k'i approach, showed him that, according to the text of the will, this little house and the land about it should come by right to Chen-chu.

Meï-chi, sighing, was about to throw herself at the feet of the magistrate to beg his pity, when he added, "This house, as well as all the objects that it contains, belongs in all justice to Chen-chu."

Chen-k'i made no objection. "This house," he said to himself, "contains only broken furniture of no value. It is true that there still is here a little rice and grain. But, since a month ago I sold eight-tenths of the harvest which was here, that which remains merits no attention. Wise magistrate!" cried he, "I give my full consent to your suggestion, and I shall make it my duty to execute in every point this judgment that you have rendered."

"Think well," replied the magistrate, "of the promise that you have just made; you must not later express any regrets, for there will not be time for you to change your resolve. Since these folk are your relatives, I count upon their testimony."

Then, raising his voice, he continued: "Just now, Lord Ni, whom I have seen face to face, has given me the following directions: 'At the foot of the wall at the left of the entrance, I have hidden five thousand ounces of silver, contained in five vases; I give them to my second son."

Chen-k'i could put no faith in these words. "If this be true," said he, "I declare to you that even if there were ten thousand ounces here, I would give them over without regret to my younger brother."

"If you should make any objections," replied the magistrate, "I shall know how to hold you to the execution of your promise."

At these words, he ordered the bailiffs to ask for a mattock and a spade.

Meï-chi made a sign to the farmer, who obeyed immediately, and opened the earth at the base of the eastern wall. There, in very truth, appeared five great earthen vases, filled to the top with ounces of silver. It was found, on counting the ingots contained in one of these vases, that there were a thousand, weighing together sixty-two pounds.

All those who stood by were struck with astonishment and admiration. Chen-k'i himself could but believe like the rest in the truth of the apparition. "If my father has not appeared to Lord Teng," said he to himself, "if he has not revealed these treasures, how could Teng have known of them, since I myself had no knowledge of this hidden wealth?"

The magistrate, resuming his words, spoke to Meï-chi: "At the foot of the wall at the right, there are another five thousand ounces of silver, divided among five other earthen vases; a sixth vase contains a thousand pieces of gold. Just now, Lord Ni has offered me this last sum in order to prove his gratitude. I have refused to accept the rich present; but he has urged it upon me so insistently that I have promised to obey his wishes."

Meï-chi bent to the earth, and replied to the magistrate: "The five thousands ounces before us!" cried she, "have surpassed all my expectations. If, at the base of the opposite wall, there is an equal sum of silver, we will take the liberty of not accepting it."

"How could I know aught," replied Lord Teng, "if the governor had not made me aware of these things? The fact that I have just announced to you is no fiction."

At these words, he ordered the farmer to open the earth at the base of the opposite wall, and there indeed were found five great vases filled with silver, and a sixth which contained only gold.

When Chen-k'i had perceived this enormous quantity of gold and silver, his face flushed, and his eyes sparkled with resentment. He would have liked to lay hands upon this treasure, but since he had just given his word he was careful not to make the least complaint.

Meï-chi and her son, transported with joy, thanked Lord Teng, bowing themselves before him to the earth.

Although Chen-k'i was consumed with wrath in his heart, he made an effort to control himself, and stammered some words of thanks. The magistrate took several sacks of leather and placed within them the pieces of gold that had been contained in the sixth vase and had them put within his sedan chair. All those who were present recognized that this sum had been promised him by the governor, and they felt that it was a just recompense for the services which he had rendered to the wife and the second son. What man would have refused so rich a reward? "When the sea-spider and the sea-bird called the *ni* are engaged in quarreling, the fisherman lives at their expense."

If Ni-chen-k'i had been a loyal and honest man, and if he had lived on good terms with his younger brother, he would have shared with equity all the paternal inheritance. Each of them would have had five thousand more ounces to add to his portion, and the thousand pieces of gold would not have passed into the hands of the magistrate. Then Ni-chen-k'i would have been spared many worries and would not have become the laughing-stock of the public. This example proves that those who employ ruses and artifices find others more skilful and adroit than they, and in seeking to harm these often harm themselves.

Let us speak now of Meï-chi and her son. The next morning, they bent their steps to the prefecture to thank Lord Teng. He, taking the portrait of the governor, pasted within it again the will, and restored both to Meï-chi.

From that moment, the mother and the son understood the mystery which the painting had concealed, and they recognized that in indicating the earth, the governor was pointing to the treasures there hidden.

Having become the possessors of ten vases filled with silver, they bought lands and gardens, and erected a noble mansion. Chen-chu married, and

had three sons who made rapid progress in study and acquired great reputation. This branch of the governor's family was the only one which became flourishing, and preserved the fame and illustrious character that he had bequeathed.

Chen-k'i had two sons who distinguished themselves only by their dissipation and their vices. His house decayed from day to day, and, after his death, the two large mansions that he had inherited were sold by his children to those of Chen-chu.

This story soon spread throughout the province, and all who heard its details recognized the hand of Providence which chastises the wicked and recompenses the virtuous even to their posterity.

Japan

INTRODUCTION

JAPANESE literature is said to have begun with the *Kojiki*, or *Records of Ancient Matters*, completed in the year 712 A.D. But it was not until the early part of the Tenth Century that we find the first examples of prose fiction. The word *Monogatari* usually means novel or story (though it is also applied to historical narrative), and is first used in connection with the two earliest tales in the Japanese language. These are the *Taketori Monogatari*, translated as *The Old Bamboo-Hewer's Story*, and the *Ise Monogatari*, or *Tales of Ise*. The authors and exact dates of both are unknown, though the story printed in this volume was probably the earlier of the two. There were several other tales written later in the same century, and throughout the following (the Eleventh) Century, the most famous of which is the long novel *Genji Monogatari*, or *Tale of the Genji*, by a woman who wrote under the name of Murasaki No Shikibu. The book was completed probably about the year 1000. It has been aptly described as a "prose epic of real life." The Eleventh Century was particularly rich in *Monogatari*.

The long and fertile Yedo Period (1603–1867) saw the flourishing of a more finished type of prose fiction than that of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries. Romances for the people were turned out in large quantities during the Seventeenth Century. The best-known novelist of the period was Saikaku. The writers of the Eighteenth Century offered little by way of novelty. But with the advent of Kioden (died 1816), the Japanese novel was given a new lease of life. It was he who gave his readers the "romantic novel pure and simple." Under the influence of Kioden a younger man, Bakin, began writing; he was a novelist who was to achieve international fame. The Nineteenth Century was rich in novels, tales, short stories — fiction of every sort. Modern Japanese writers are most of them working under the influence of Europe, having ceased to seek inspiration in the traditions of their own past.

THE OLD BAMBOO-HEWER'S STORY

(Anonymous: Early 10th Century, A.D.)

THE *Taketori no Okina no Monogatari* is one of the two oldest tales in Japanese literature, and probably the earlier. Nothing is known of the writer.

This is an episodic work of the fairy-tale variety, in which the writer has freely borrowed from Chinese sources.

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THE OLD BAMBOO-HEWER'S STORY

THE COMING OF THE LADY KAGUYA AND THE DAYS OF CHILDHOOD

FORMERLY there lived an old man, a bamboo-hewer, who hewed bamboos on the bosky hill-side, and manywise he wrought them to serve men's needs, and his name was Sanugi no Miyakko. Now one day, while plying the hatchet in a grove of bamboos, was he suddenly ware of a tall stem, whence streamed forth through the gloom a dazzling light. Much marvelling, he drew nigh to the reed, and saw that the glory proceeded from the heart thereof, and he looked again and beheld a tiny creature, a palm's breadth in stature and of rare loveliness, which stood midmost the splendour. Then he said to himself, "Day after day, from dawn to dusk, toil I among these bamboo-reeds, and this child that abides amidst them I may surely claim as mine own." So he put forth his hand, and took the tiny being, and carried it home, and gave it to the goodwife and her women to be nourished. And passing fair was the child, but so frail and tender that it was needful to place it in a basket to be reared. But after lighting upon this gift whilst hewing bamboos, he ceased not from his daily toil, and night after night, as he shore through the reeds and opened their internodes, came he upon one filled with grain of gold, and so, ere long, he amassed great wealth. Meanwhile the child, being duly tended, grew daily in stature, and after three months — wonderful to relate! — her stature was as that of a maiden of full years. Then her tresses were lifted and she donned the robe of maidenhood, but

still came not forth from behind the curtain. Thus cherished and watched over and tenderly reared, grew she fair of form, nor could the world show her like, and there was no gloom in any corner of the dwelling, but brightness reigned throughout, nor ever did the Ancient fall into a sorrowful mood but that his sadness was chased away when he beheld the maiden, nor was any angry word ever heard beneath that roof, and happily the days went by. Long the Ancient hewed bamboos, and gathered gold, and thus it was that he came to flourish exceedingly in the land. After this wise grew the girl to maidenhood, and the Ancient named her Mimurodo Imube no Akita, but she was more commonly called the Lady Kaguya, the Precious Slender Bamboo of the Field of Autumn. Then for three days a great feast was held, and the neighbours, one and all, menfolk and womenfolk, were invited, and they came in merry crowds and noble was the revelry.

The Wooing of the Maiden

Now the gentles dwelling in those parts, men of name and eke men of low degree, thought of nothing but how they might win this fair maiden to wife, or even gaze upon her beauty, and so distracted were they with love that they let their passion be plain to all the world. Around the fence and about the porch they lingered, but in vain, for no glimpse of the maiden could be got, nor slept they when night came but wandered out in the darkness, and made holes here and there in the fence and peered through these, but to no purpose did they strain their eyes, for never caught they sight of her on whom they longed to gaze, and thus sped their wooing from the twilight-hour of the monkey onwards. Well-nigh beside themselves were they with love and woe, but no sign was vouchsafed them, and though they essayed to gain speech of some among the household, no word of answer ever got they. So it was, yet many a noble suitor still lingered thereabouts, watching through the livelong day and through the livelong night, to catch some glimpse of the maiden; but those of low degree after a time bethought them 'twere vain to pace up and down thus bootlessly, and they departed and came no more. But there tarried five suitors, true lovers, and worthier of the name belike, in whose hearts, love died not down, and night and day they still haunted the spot. And these noble lovers were the Prince Ishizukuri and the Prince Kuramochi, the Sadaijin Dainagon Abe no Miushi and the Chiunagon Ōtomo no Miyuki, and Morotada, the Lord of Iso.

When a woman is somewhat fairer than the crowd of women, how greatly do men long to gaze upon her beauty! How much more filled with desire to behold the rare loveliness of the Lady Kaguya were these lords, who would touch no food, nor could wean their thoughts from her, and continued to pace up and down without the fence, albeit their pain

was thus in no wise eased. They indited supplications, but no answer was vouchsafed; they offered stanzas of complaint, but these too were disregarded; yet their love lessened no whit, and they affronted the ice and snow of winter and the thunderous heats of mid-summer with equal fortitude. So passed the days, and upon a certain day these lords summoned the Hewer and prayed him to bestow his daughter upon one of them, bowing before him and rubbing their palms together suppliantwise. But he said: "No child of mine by blood is the maiden, nor can she be constrained to follow my will." And the days and the months went by, and the lords returned to their mansions, but their thoughts still dwelt upon the Maiden, and many a piteous prayer they made, and many a supplication they indited, nor cared they to cease their wooing, for surely, they said to themselves, the Maiden might not remain unmated for ever. And they continued their suit, and so plainly did they manifest the strength of their passion that the Ancient was constrained to say to the Maiden, "By the grace of Buddha, through the cycle of changes hast thou come to us, daughter, and from babe to maid have we cherished thee, and I pray thee hearken to the words of an old man who loveth thee passing well."

And the Maiden answered:

"What might my father say that his daughter would not give dutiful ear to? I know not if I came to thee through the cycle of changes, but this I know, that thou art my dear father."

Then the Ancient replied:

"Right happy do thy words make me, daughter; but consider, I am an old man whose years outnumber seventy, to-day I may pass away or to-morrow, and 'tis the way of the world that the youth cleave to the maid, and the maid to the youth, for thus the world increaseth, nor otherwise are things ordered."

But Kaguya said:

"Oh father, what mean these words you utter; must it then be as you say?"

"Ay," replied the Ancient, "though strangely hast thou come to us through the cycle of changes, yet hast thou the nature of a woman, while such are thy father's years that he may not long tarry in the world to protect thee. These lords have sought thee to wife for months and years, listen, prithee, to their supplication, and let them have speech with thee, each in due turn."

Kaguya answered:

"Not so fair am I that I may be certain of a man's faith, and were I to mate with one whose heart proved fickle, what a miserable fate were mine! Noble lords, without doubt, are these of whom thou speakest, but I would not wed a man whose heart should be all untried and unknown."

And the Ancient said:

"Thou speakest my very thoughts, daughter. But, prithee, what manner of man hast thou a mind to mate with? Assuredly these lords are of noble nature and nurture."

Then she answered:

"Nay, 'tis but that I would know what the quality of these noble gentlemen's constancy may be. So like are the hearts of men that one may by no means easily part the better from the worse; go, I pray you, to these lords, and say to them, your daughter will follow him who shall prove himself the worthiest to mate with."

And the Ancient, nodding assent to her words, said: "'Tis well."

Now the night fell, and the suitors assembled and serenaded the Maiden with flute-music and with singing, with chanting to accompaniments and piping, and with cadenced tap and clap of fan, in the midst whereof came forth the Ancient, and thus spake them:

"Months and years have my lords tarried by this poor hut, and their servant presents his respectful homage and ventures to offer his humble gratitude for high favour. But many are his years, and he knows not whether he may pass away to-day or to-morrow. After this wise hath he spoken to the Maiden and prayed her to choose one among your lordships for a husband; but she would fain learn which of you be the worthiest, and him alone will she wed. Fair seemed her speech to your servant, perchance your lordships, too, will not disdain her words." And they nodded assent, saying: "It is well." Whereupon the Ancient went within and spoke with the damsel, and thus she expressed her will:

"In Tenjiku is a beggar's bowl of stone, which, of old, the Buddha himself bore, in quest whereof let Prince Ishizukuri depart and bring me the same. And on the mountain Hōrai, that towers over the Eastern ocean, grows a tree with roots of silver and trunk of gold and fruitage of pure white jade, and I bid Prince Kuramochi fare thither and break off and bring me a branch thereof. Again in the land of Morokoshi men fashion fur-robes of the pelt of the Flame-proof Rat, and I pray the Dainagon to find me one such. Then of the Chiunagon I require the rainbow-hued jewel that hides its sparkle deep in the dragon's head; and from the hands of the Lord of Iso would I fain receive the cowry-shell that the swallow brings hither over the broad sea-plain."

But the Ancient said:

"Terrible tasks these be — the things thou requirest, daughter, are not to be found within the four seas; how may one bid these noble lords depart upon like quests?"

"Nay," quoth the damsel, "these be no tasks beyond stout men's strength."

Thereupon the Ancient saw that there was nothing for it but to obey, and he went out from her, and told the suitors all that had passed, saying:

"Thus hath it been willed, and these are the tasks that must be accomplished that your worth may be known."

But the princes and the lords murmured among themselves, and said: "'Tis, forsooth, that the Lady holds in disdain our courteous suit." So they turned and with heavy hearts fared each to his own home.

The Sacred Begging-Bowl of the Buddha

Now the days to come seemed void of pleasure to Prince Ishizukuri if never he might gaze upon the Lady's beauty, and he fell to turning over in his mind whether he might not light upon the Holy Buddha's bowl if he went up and down the land of Tenjiku in search thereof. But the Prince cared not to set out lightly on such a journey, and after much pondering over the matter he bethought himself it were after all a vain quest to fare tens of thousands of leagues on the chance of finding, in all the broad land of Tenjiku, a certain beggar's dish. Therefore, he let it be made known to the Lady that he had that very day undertaken the Quest; but towards Tenjiku he fared not a league, but hid him in Yamato, and abode there three years, at the end whereof, in a hill monastery in Tōchi, he found upon an altar of Binzuru a bowl blackened by age and begrimed with smoke, which he took and wrapped in a web of brocade. He then attached the gift to an artificial Bloom-branch, and sought again the dwelling of the Lady Kaguya, and caused the gift to be carried in to her. And as she looked upon the Bowl she marvelled greatly, and in it lay a scroll, which she opened, and a stanza was writ thereon:

Over seas, over hills
hath thy servant fared, and weary
and wayworn he perisheth:
O what tears hath cost this bowl of stone,
what floods of streaming tears!

Then the Lady looked again to see if the Bowl shone with light, but not so much as a firefly's twinkle could she discover, and she caused the bowl to be returned to the Prince, and with it was bestowed a scroll whereon was writ a verse:

Of the hanging dewdrop
not even the passing sheen
dwells herein:
On the Hill of Darkness, the Hill of Ogura,
what couldest thou hope to find?

Thereupon the Prince cast away the Bowl and made answer thuswise:

Nay, on the Hill of Brightness
what splendour
will not pale?
would that away from the light of thy beauty
the sheen of yonder Bowl might prove me true!

But no answer would the Lady make, nor give ear to any supplication and the Prince, wearied with bootless complainings, after awhile turned him sadly away and departed. And still men say of a crestfallen fellow, "hachi (haji) wo suteru."

The Jewel-Bearing Branch of Mount Hōrai

Of a wily turn was Prince Kuramochi, and he gave out to the world that he was about to take the baths in the land of Tsukushi, but to the Lady Kaguya he let it be declared that he was setting out upon the Quest after the Jewel-laden Branch. So he fared towards Naniwa with some of his squires, but not many, for he alleged him fain to travel without state, and took with him but a few of those who were in closest attendance upon their lord, and even these, after they had watched him with their eyes as he took boat, went back to Miako. Thus the Prince made folk think he had departed faring towards Tsukushi or towards Hōrai, but he tarried three days at Naniwa, and then turned him again capitalwards, being sculled up-stream. Beforehand all needful commands had been given, and six men of the Uchimaro family, the most noted craftsmen of the time, had been sought out and lodged in a dwelling aloof from the world-ways and surrounded with a triple fence, and there the Prince too retreated. Then he furnished the chief of the craftsmen with resources drawn from sixteen of his farms, the produce of which he allotted to that purpose, and caused furnaces to be erected and a jewel-laden branch to be fashioned differing no whit from that which the Lady Kaguya had bidden him go in quest of. Thus cunningly the Prince laid his scheme, and taking the branch with him set off secretly, and embarking in a boat journeyed down to Naniwa, whence he let it be made known to his squires that he had returned, and assuming the guise of one terribly worn and spent with travel, awaited their coming. And his squires and retainers came accordingly to meet him, whereupon the Prince caused the Branch to be placed in a coffer which was covered with brocade, and a clamor arose as he went through the city. "Wonderful! the Prince Kuramochi comes up to the capital, bearing with him the Udonge in bloom." But the Lady Kaguya, when these tidings reached her, said to herself, "This Prince hath surely gotten the better of me," and her heart broke within her. While thus matters stood was heard a knocking at the entrance, and presently it was announced that the Prince had presented himself and begged to be permitted to speak with the Lady, although still wearing his travelling-garb, for he had perilled his life in the quest after the Jewel-laden Branch, and had won it, and now desired to lay it at her feet. The Ancient received the message, and took the Branch and carried it within, and attached to it was a scroll whereon was written a stanza:

Though it were at the peril
of my very life,

without the Jewel-laden Branch
in my hands never again
would I have dared to return!

But the Lady looked on the Branch and was sad, and the Ancient came to her hastily, saying, "'Tis the very branch, daughter, thou desiredst the Prince to bring thee from Mount Hōrai, and he has accomplished the Quest thou badest him undertake without failing in any particular, nor mayst thou delay his guerdon; without tarrying to change his raiment, and before seeking his own mansion, has he hasted hither, nor longer canst thou refuse his suit."

But the maiden answered nothing, resting her chin mournfully on her palm, while the tears streamed in floods over her cheeks. Meanwhile the Prince, thinking that now he need dread no denial, remained waiting in the porch-way, and the Ancient resuming, said: "The like of this Jewel-laden Branch is not to be found within the four seas, thou canst not refuse the promised guerdon, nor is the Prince uncomely of person."

But the Lady answered: "Hard it is thus still to oppose my father's will, but this thing is deemed unattainable whereof I laid the quest upon the Prince, yet how easily hath he won it; a bitter grief it is to thy daughter." Then the Ancient fell to busying himself with putting the chamber in order, and after awhile went out and accosted the Prince again, saying: "Your servant would fain know what manner of place it may be where grows this tree — how wonderful a thing it is, and lovely and pleasant to see!" And the Prince answered: "The year before yesteryear, on the tenth of the second month (*Kisaragi*), we took boat at Naniwa and sculled out into the ocean, not knowing what track to follow; but I thought to myself, what would be the profit of continuing life if I might not attain the desire of my heart; so pressed we onwards, blown where the wind listed. If we perished even what mattered it, while we lived we would make what way we could over the sea-plain, and perchance thus might we somehow reach the mountain men do call Hōrai. So resolved we sculled further and further over the heaving waters, until far behind us lay the shores of our own land. And as we wandered thus, now deep in the trough of the sea we saw its very bottom, now blown by the gale we came to strange lands, where creatures like demons fell upon us and were like to have slain us. Now, knowing neither whence we had come nor whither we tended, we were almost swallowed up by the sea; now, failing of food we were driven to live upon roots; now, again, indescribably terrible beings came forth and would have devoured us; or we had to sustain our bodies by eating of the spoil of the sea. Beneath strange skies were we, and no human creature was there to give us succour; to many diseases fell we prey as we drifted along knowing not whitherwards, and so tossed we over the sea-plain, letting our boat follow the wind for five hundred days. Then, about the hour of the dragon, four hours ere noon, saw we a high hill looming faintly over the watery

waste. Long we gazed at it, and marvelled at the majesty of the mountain rising out of the sea. Lofty it was and fair of form, and doubting not it was the mountain we were seeking, our hearts were filled with awe. We plied the oar, and coasted it for two days or three, and then we saw a woman, arrayed like an angel, come forth out of the hills, bearing a silver vessel which she filled with water. So we landed and accosted her, saying: 'How call men this mountain?' and she said, ''Tis Mount Hōrai,' whereat our hearts were filled with joy. 'And you, who tell us this, who then are you?' we inquired. 'My name is Hōkanruri,' she answered, and thereupon suddenly withdrew among the hills. On scanning the mountain, we saw no man could climb its slopes, so steep were they, and we wandered about the foot thereof, where grew trees bearing blooms the world cannot show the like of. There we found a stream flowing down from the mountain, the waters whereof were rainbow-hued, yellow as gold, white as silver, blue as precious ruri; and the stream was spanned by bridges built up of divers gems, and by it grew trees laden with dazzling jewels, and from one of these I broke off the branch which I venture now to offer to the Lady Kaguya. An evil deed, I fear me, but how could I do otherwise than accomplish the object of my Quest? Delightful beyond all words is yonder mountain, in all the world there exists not its like. After I had plucked off the branch, my heart brake within me, and I hasted on board, and we sped hitherwards with a fair wind behind us, and after some four hundred days came to Naniwa, whence I departed without tarrying, so great was my desire to lay the Branch at the feet of the Lady, nor did I even change my raiment, soddened with the brine of ocean."

Moved by the piteous tale the Ancient composed a stanza:

Amid the gloomy bamboo-groves
long long have I hewed bamboos,
even upon the wild hill-sides;
but thus sad an internode
(thus sad a fortune) never have I beheld.

The Prince read the verse and said: "For these many days have I endured misery, now methinks shall I know peace," and indited a stanza in reply:

The sleeve of my garment
but this day hath become dry,
and of miseries
the countless kinds I have endured
no longer will be remembered by me.

At this juncture came six men within the fence, one after the other, and one of them carried a cleft bamboo, bearing a scroll in the cleft, and said: "The chief of the craftsmen, Ayabe no Uchimaro, humbly represents that he and his fellows for the space of a thousand days broke their hearts and

spent their strength in fashioning the Jewel-laden Branch. Yet, though long and heavy their labours, they have received no wage for their toil, and he humbly prays that they may be accorded due payment that they may have wherewithal to buy food for their wives and little ones." Then he lifted up the bamboo with the scroll in its cleft. The Ancient, with his head on one side, marvelled as he heard the words of the craftsman, but the Prince was beside himself with dismay, and felt his liver perish within him. And the Lady Kaguya, hearing of the matter, commanded that the scroll should be brought to her, whereupon it was taken within and unrolled and thus was it writ thereon: "Lately His Highness shut himself up with us mean craftsmen, and caused a jewel-laden branch of the rarest beauty to be fashioned, and promised me by way of guerdon the mastership of the craft. And after pondering over the matter, coming to know that the Branch was to be bestowed upon the Lady Kaguya, who was about to become a Lady of the Palace, I deemed it well to seek aid at the Lady's dwelling that my guerdon might be given me and the wages due be paid to us."

As the Lady Kaguya read these words, her face, which had been clouded with grief, turned radiant with joy, and she summoned the Ancient and smilingly said to him: "Ha! a veritable Branch from Hōrai this; by my faith, let his false and trickful Highness be dismissed at once and take his Jewel-laden Branch with him!"

The Ancient nodded assent, saying: "As the Branch is clearly a counterfeit, there need be no hesitation about returning it."

And with the Branch the Lady Kaguya, her heart now free of gloom, sent this stanza:

Was it the true branch of Hōrai
I asked as I gazed on thy gift:
mere leaves of sound (words)
were the jewels that adorned it,
the Branch of Bloom thou broughtest me.

So was the False Branch returned to the Prince. The Ancient remembered the lying tale wherewith he had been beguiled, and regarded His Highness with anger, who meanwhile stood still a space, not knowing whether to go or stay. But as the sun sank deeper in the west, he bethought him again, and slunk off. Now the Lady Kaguya summoned the craftsmen who had caused this pother, and praised them, giving them ample largesse, whereat they rejoiced greatly, saying, thus they knew things would be, and departed. But on their way homewards they were set upon and punished by order of the Prince, blood was shed, and all their treasure was taken from them, and thus despoiled they fled and vanished. But His Highness felt he was put to unexampled shame, and his discomfiture threw a shadow over the remainder of his days. "Not only," he

complained, "have I lost my mistress, but my name has become a reproach throughout the land." Thereupon he fled to the deepest recesses of the hills, and dwelt there all the rest of his days. Times and again the chiefs and retainers of his household sought to discover their lord's retreat, but could not, and he was as it were dead. And it was out of this history of His Highness Prince Kuramochi that arose the expression "tamazakaru."

The Flame-proof Fur-Robe

The Sadaijin Abe no Miushi was a lord of wealth and substance, and mighty withal. In the year whereof we speak, came to our country a merchant of Morokoshi, by name Wōkei, on board a ship of that land, to whom was indited a letter requiring him to buy for the Sadaijin a fur-robe, which was said to exist, made of the pelt of the Flame-proof Rat, and Ono no Fusamori, one of the trustiest of his lord's squires, was despatched in charge of the missive. So Fusamori took the letter and went down to the coast, and delivered it to Wōkei, to whom he likewise gave gold. Wōkei unrolled the scroll and read it, and made answer thus:

"The Flame-proof Fur-Robe is not to be obtained in my country; men have talked of such a robe, but it has not been seen. If it exists anywhere, it is a thing that should assuredly be brought to this land, but 'tis very hard to get by way of trade. Nevertheless, if by any hap such a robe has been carried to India, the great merchants may be able to obtain it, and should they fail, the gold now bestowed upon me shall be returned to him who brought it, to hand back to the Lord Sadaijin."

Upon the ship's return from the land of Morokoshi, the Sadaijin, having tidings that Fusamori was on board and was making ready to come up to the capital, despatched a swift horse to meet him, so that he journeyed from Tsukushi to Miako in the short space of seven days. Then a letter was delivered to the Sadaijin, who unrolled it and read these words: "The Flame-proof Fur-Robe have I finally won, after great toil and the despatch of many men in quest thereof, for difficult it is to find now, as it was of old. Long ago a venerable priest from India brought such a robe into our land, and I heard that it was preserved in a certain temple lying among the remote western hills. I besought the aid of the ruler of the district, which was accorded me, and was allowed to purchase the robe, but the money was not sufficient, and fifty riyōs of my own monies were added, which doubtless will be repaid to me ere the ship depart, or the Robe will be returned as pledge for the same." "Nay," cried the Sadaijin, "what is this talk about the gold; let the merchant have his gold without delay; welcome to me beyond words is the fruit of his quest." And turning his face towards the land of Morokoshi, he bowed him thrice, clasping his hands thankfully. Then, looking at the casket wherein the Fur-Robe was laid folded, he saw that it was beautifully adorned with inlaid work of

various kinds of precious ruri, and the Robe itself was of a glaucous colour, the hairs tipped with shining gold, a treasure indeed of incomparable loveliness, more to be admired for its pure excellence than even for its virtue in resisting the flame of fire. " 'Tis the very Robe, how pleased, methinks, the Lady Kaguya will be," cried the Sadaijin, and laid the Robe carefully in the casket which he attached to a Branch of Bloom; and putting on his fairest apparel, and feeling assured that the gift would win him his wooing, added a scroll, whereon was writ a stanza, and carried the gift to the Lady's abode.

Endless are the fires of love
that consume me, yet unconsumed
is the Robe of Fur:
dry at last are my sleeves,
for shall I not see her face this day!

Thus cheering himself, the Sadaijin reached the entrance of the Lady's dwelling, and the Ancient came out and took the casket and bore it within to the Lady Kaguya. And she gazed awhile upon the Robe and said:

" A fair robe of fur it seems to be, but till it be proved, how can we know if it be not false."

But the Ancient answered:

"However that may be, deign to invite the Sadaijin to enter; the like of yonder Robe the world doth not appear to hold; be not so distrustful, daughter, nor drive men to despair."

Then he went out and invited the Sadaijin to enter. And now the Lady, though her heart was heavy, felt she must receive him, for greatly as the Ancient had grieved over her continued maidenhood, seeking ever to find her a worthy mate, yet never had he sought to constrain her, seeing how deeply she dreaded to give herself to any man.

But she said to the Ancient: "If this Robe be thrown amid the flames and be not burnt up, I shall know it is in very truth the Flame-proof Robe, and may no longer refuse this lord's suit. As it has not its fellow in the world, and 'tis averred to be, without doubt, the famous Robe that resists flame, the proof may well be dared."

And the Ancient agreed, and told the Sadaijin it must be so, whereupon he answered: "What doubt can there be — even in the land of Morokoshi the Robe was not to be got, and could only be found after long and toilsome search; nevertheless, as the Lady will have it so, let the Robe be cast among the flames."

And a fire was kindled, and the Robe was flung therein and in a flash of flame perished utterly. So was it shown that it was not, in truth, made of the famous Flame-proof Fur. When the Sadaijin saw this, his face grew green as grass, and he stood there astonished. But the Lady Kaguya rejoiced exceedingly, and caused the casket to be returned with a scroll in it whereon was writ a verse: —

Without a vestige even left
thus to burn utterly away,
had I dreamt it of this robe of fur,
O, would I have exposed it
to so unexpected a fate!

But the Sadaijin withdrew discomfited and shut himself up in his mansion. And men, hearing that Abe had accomplished his Quest and was abiding with the Lady Kaguya, inquired at the Lady's dwelling if that were so, and were told the fate of the Robe of Fur and that he abode not with the Lady, and hearing this they exclaimed, "An *ahenashi* piece of work in truth, this fruitless job."

THE JEWEL IN THE DRAGON'S HEAD

THE Dainagon Ōtomo no Miyuki, being in his mansion, assembled his household and deigned to say: "In the head of the Dragon lies a jewel, rainbow-hued, and on him who shall win it me shall nought remain unbestowed he may desire." His men listened to their lord's words, and one said humbly: "The high behests of our lord his servants hear with trembling awe; but how shall a mortal man light upon such a jewel, or draw it forth from the head of a Dragon!" Whereto the Dainagon answered: "If ye call yourselves the servants of your lord, even at the peril of your lives are ye bound to do his bidding. The jewel whereof I speak is not to be found in our land, nor yet in the land of Tenjiku, nor in that of Morokoshi; the Dragon is a monster that creeps up the hill-slopes from the sea and rushes down them into the ocean — but of what can ye be thinking in shirking this Quest?" And they said: "As our lord wills, so must it be, and albeit the task were a perilous one, we will not shirk it." Whereupon the Dainagon regarded them with a smile, and cried, "Ye would not surely put shame on your lord's name nor refuse to do his bidding."

Then he dismissed them upon the Quest after the Dragon's head gem, and that they might not want for food and support on their way, endless store of silk and cotton and coin and other things needful were bestowed upon them. And the Dainagon promised that he would live in seclusion, awaiting their return, and bade them not cast their looks homewards until they had won the jewel. So they hearkened humbly each of them and departed.

They were bidden to take the jewel from the Dragon's head, but where to turn their steps they could not tell, and they fell to reproaching their lord for being thus bewitched by a fair face. Then they divided amongst them what had been bestowed upon them, and some withdrew to their houses, there to lie hid, while others went whither they listed. 'Twas very well to be loyal to parent and prince, as the maxim runs, they muttered, but a behest so burdensome as this could not be obeyed, and bitterly they reproached their lord for having laid upon them such a task.

Meanwhile the Dainagon deeming his mansion common and mean, and unfit to receive the Lady Kaguya, caused it to be adorned throughout and made beautiful with curious lacquer-work in gold and silver, as well as with plain bright lacquer, and over the roof he ordered silken cloths of divers colours to be drawn, and every chamber to be hung with fine brocade, and the panels of the sliding partitions to be enriched with cunningly-wrought pictures, and the splendour of the mansion passed all description. And feeling sure that ere long he should obtain possession of the Lady Kaguya, he put away all the women of his household, and passed the days and the nights in solitude, and through the days and the nights awaited the return of his men; and so a year came and went, but still he heard no tidings of them. At last, weary of waiting, and sick at heart with the lack of news, he took two of his squires with him, and thus meanly served journeyed to Naniwa, and made inquiry there if any of his folk had taken boat in quest of the Dragon, to slay the monster and win the jewel that lay in his head; but the shipmen laughed and answered: "'Tis a strange thing thou speakest of; on such a business be sure no boat has left this haven." Thereupon the Dainagon said to himself: "These be but silly, feeble ship-folk, how should they know aught of this matter? Myself I will take my bow and despatch this monster, and draw the jewel from his head, nor wait longer for these laggard fellows of mine." So he took a boat, and embarked in it, and fared over sea until the land lay far behind him, and still he caused the boat to be sculled on until his keel rode on the waters of distant Tsukushi. Then without any foresign the wind rose and the air darkened, and the craft was driven hither and thither, blown about by the gale; now it seemed as though the boat must founder in the trough of the sea, now great billows threatened to topple over and overwhelm it, while the thunder-god thundered so appallingly that his monstrous drums seemed to hang close overhead. So the Dainagon lost heart, and cried aloud, saying: "Never before have I been in such perilous case, alas! what help may be invoked?" And the helmsman answered: "Long have I voyaged in these waters, yet so terrible an ill fortune as this never hath befallen me; if we sink not to the bottom of the sea, the thunder will strike us; if by good hap the favour of the gods save us from these perils, the gale will drive the boat far amid (the barbarian islands of) the southern ocean; woe worth the day I took service with my lord of evil fate, where death, belike, must be the wages!" And as he spoke the shipman burst into tears. But the Dainagon said:

"He who fares over sea must needs trust himself to the helmsman, who should be steadfast as a high hill. Why speakest thou then thus despairfully?" and as he uttered these words a terrible sickness came upon him. Then the helmsman answered: "Is your servant then a god that he can render service now? The howling of the wind and the raging of the waves and the mighty roar of the thunder are signs of the wrath of the god whom

my lord offends, who would slay the dragon of the deep, for through the dragon is the storm raised, and well it were if my lord offered a prayer."

"Thou sayest wisely," answered the Dainagon, and he fell to calling upon the god of seafolk, repenting him of his frowardness and folly who had sought to slay the Dragon, and vowing solemnly that never more would he strive to harm so much as a hair of the great ruler of the deep. A thousand times he repeated his prayer, neither standing nor sitting (but bowing him humbly before the god without ceasing). Then — was it not in answer to his prayer? — the thunder died down and the gloom lifted, but still the wind blew mightily. "'Tis the Dragon's handiwork," said the helmsman after a while, "a fair wind blows now, and drives the boat swiftly towards our own land." But the Dainagon could not understand him. For three or four days the bark sped before the wind till land came in sight, and they saw it was the strand of Akashi in Harima. Nevertheless the Dainagon would not be persuaded they had not been blown southwards on some savage shore, and lay motionless and panting in the bottom of the boat, nor would he rise, when the governor of the district, to whom his squires had sent tidings of their lord's misadventure, presented himself. But under the pine trees that overshadowed the beach mats were spread, whereupon the Dainagon saw it was on no savage shore they had drifted, and he roused himself and got on land. And when the governor saw him, he could not forbear smiling at the wretched appearance of the discomfited lord, chilled to the very bone, with swollen belly and eyes lustreless as sloes. But the proper orders were given, and a litter got ready in which the Dainagon was borne slowly to his mansion. Then those of his followers whom he had sent upon the Quest got wind somehow of their lord's return, and presented themselves humbly before him, saying: "We have failed in our quest, and have lost all claim to an audience, but now 'tis known how terribly hard was the task imposed, and hither have we ventured to come, and we trust that a gracious forbearance will be extended and that we shall not be driven out of our lords' following."

The Dainagon went out to receive them and said: "Ye have done well to return, even empty-handed. Yonder Dragon, assuredly, has kinship with the Thunder-God, and whoever shall lay hands on him to take that jewel that gleams in his head shall find himself in parlous peril. Myself am sore spent with toil and hardship, and no guerdon have I won. A thief of men's souls, and a destroyer of their bodies, is the Lady Kaguya, nor ever will I seek her abode again, nor ever bend ye your steps thitherwards."

Then the Dainagon took what was left of his substance, and divided it among those whom he had bidden go in quest of the Jewel. And when his women, whom he had dismissed, heard of his misadventure, they laughed till their sides were sore, while the silken cloths he had caused to be drawn over the roof of his mansion were carried away, thread by thread, by the crows to line their nests with. And when men asked whether the Dainagon

Ōtomo had won the Dragon-Jewel, they were answered: "Not so, but his eyeballs are become two jewels very like a pair of sloes, nor other jewels has he won." "Ana! tayegata," was the reply, and thus the expression first arose.

The Royal Hunt

MEANWHILE the fame of the incomparable loveliness of the Lady Kaguya had reached the Court, and the Mikado caused one of the palace dames, Fusago by name, to be summoned, and said to her: "Of many a man has the strange beauty of the Kaguya been the ruin; go thou, therefore, and see what manner of damsel the girl be."

The Dame heard and departed, and came to the dwelling of the Bamboo-Hewer, where she was courteously received by the goodwife and invited to enter. "'Tis at the bidding of His Majesty I have journeyed hither, who has heard that the beauty of the Lady Kaguya, passes all description, and has commanded me to seek audience of her."

So spoke she and the goodwife answered, "Your servant will humbly repeat your message," and sought the inner apartment, and prayed the maiden to receive the Palace Dame. But she would not, for that she was no wise beautiful, she said. Then the goodwife chided her for her churlish speech, and inquired how she dared treat thus rudely the King's message. But the Lady Kaguya still refused to receive the Dame, saying that His Majesty showed little wisdom in despatching one of his ladies upon such an errand. Nor might the Ancient nor his goodwife constrain her, for though she filled the place of a child born to them, ever she held herself aloof from the ways of the world. So the goodwife sought again the Palace Dame, and said, "Pity 'tis, but of so tender years is our daughter she may not venture to meet a Lady of the Court." But the Dame answered, not without some anger: "The Damsel may not be excused, for His Majesty has bidden me see her, and how can I return without fulfilling the Royal behest? Will she set at nought the commands of the Ruler of the Land, and so be guilty of an unexampled folly?"

Still the Lady Kaguya willed not to give audience to the Palace Dame, saying: "I cannot yield obedience in this matter, if need be, let me be put to death."

And the Dame thereupon returned to the Palace, and made report of what had occurred.

"Verily," said His Majesty, "I can well believe 'tis a woman who revels in the destruction of men." So after a pause, thinking over the matter, the Mikado concluded that she must be constrained to yield due obedience, and caused the Ancient to be summoned to the Palace, to whom was conveyed this command. "A daughter thou hast, Kaguya by name, whom we bid thee bring to us. Fair of face and form we have heard she

is, and we sent one of our Ladies to see her, but she would not be seen. How comes it our will is thus disdainfully received in thy house?"

To which the Ancient answered humbly: "It is true the child willed not to become a Lady of the Palace, and caused your servant sore grief, but he will hasten back to his dwelling and lay your Majesty's gracious commands upon her." To which was deigned the reply: "How! has not the Ancient reared the child, and may she oppose his will? Let the Maiden be brought hither, and a hat of nobility, perchance, shall be her father's reward."

The Ancient rejoiced greatly at hearing this, and returned to his dwelling, and conveyed the Royal command to the Lady Kaguya, bidding her no longer refuse obedience. But she said: "Never will I serve His Majesty as 'tis desired; and if constraint be used towards your daughter, she will pine away and die, and the price of my father's hat of nobility will be the destruction of his child."

"Nay, die thou shalt not," cried the Ancient; "what were a hat of nobility to me if never again I beheld thee? Yet, daughter, I pray thee, tell thy father why thou refusest to become a Lady of the Palace and why shouldest thou die if thou shouldest serve his Majesty?"

"Empty words seem thy daughter's," answered the Damsel, "but true will they prove if she be constrained to do this thing. Many a suitor has wooed her, lords of no mean estate, who nevertheless have been dismissed, and should she listen to his Majesty, her name would become a reproach among men."

Then the Ancient answered: "Little care I for matters of state, but thy days must know no peril, nor shalt thou be in any wise constrained, and I will hasten to the palace and humbly represent to His Majesty that thou mayest not become an inmate thereof.

Thereupon he went up to the Capital, and represented that the Lady Kaguya, after hearing the Royal Command, nevertheless willed not to become a Lady of the Palace, and might not be constrained without peril of her life; and further, that she was not the born child of Miyakko Maro, but had been found by him one day when hewing bamboos on the hillside, and that she was in ways and moods of other fashion than the fashion of this world. Upon this being reported to his Majesty, he said: "Dwells not this Miyakko Maro among the hills hard by our capital? Let a Royal Hunt be ordered, and, perchance, thus we may gain a glimpse of the Maiden."

The Ancient, when the Royal pleasure was made known to him, said: "'Tis an excellent device; thus may his Majesty, without difficulty, on the Hunt being unexpectedly ordered, gain a glimpse of the Lady Kaguya ere a thought of it enters her heart."

So a day was appointed, and the Royal Hunt ordered, and the Mikado watched for an opportunity and entered the Bamboo-Hewer's dwelling.

And as the threshold was crossed, it was seen that the house was filled with light, and midmost the glory stood a Being. "Ha! 'tis the Lady," cried the Mikado, and drew nigh, but she made to fly, and a royal hand was laid upon her sleeve, and she covered her face, but not with such swiftness that a glimpse of it was not caught, and the loveliness of it was seen to be incomparable. And His Majesty would fain have led her forth, but she stood there and spoke these words: "No liege of your Majesty is his servant, and she may not therefore be thus led away." But it was answered that she must not resist the Royal Will, and a palace litter approached, whereupon of a sudden the Lady dissolved in thin air and vanished. The monarch stood dumb with astonishment, and understood that the Lady was of no mortal mould, and said: "It shall be as thou desirest, Maiden; but 'tis prayed that thou resume thy form, that once more thy beauty may be seen."

So she resumed her form and the glory of her loveliness filled the Royal heart with overwhelming delight; and graciously was the Ancient remembered, through whom this joy had come to His Majesty, and upon him was bestowed the rank of Chief of the Hiyak'kwan.

But great was the grief that the Lady willed not to dwell in the Palace, and as the Monarch was about to be borne away, it seemed as if the Royal soul was being left behind, and a stanza was composed whereof the words were these:

Mournful the return
of the Royal Hunt,
and full of sorrow the brooding heart,
for she resists and stays behind,
the Lady Kaguya!

And the Lady answered thuswise: —

Under the roof o'ergrown with hopbine
long were the years
she passed,
how may she dare to look upon
the Palace of Precious Jade?

When the answer was read, more than ever was the Monarch disinclined to go back bootless to the Palace, and long the litter was delayed, for no resolve could be come to, until it seemed at last as though the dawn would be there waited for through the night; whereupon reluctantly was the order given to return. But the Ladies of the Court were disdained, for their beauty paled before that of the Lady Kaguya, aye the fairest of them, when compared with her image, lost all her charms. Only on the Lady could the Royal heart dwell, and on none other, and the apartments of the Palace Dames were abandoned and desolate, sad to say! while letter after letter was sent to the Lady Kaguya, who answered them not ungently,

and verses were composed and fairly writ on scrolls attached to posies, and interchanged, and thus the days passed by.

The Celestial Robe of Feathers

So in the Palace and in the Hut was consolation attained: and three years went by, when, in the early spring, the Lady Kaguya fell to gazing upon the shining orb of the rising moon, and a brooding sadness seemed to take possession of her. She was counselled not thus ceaselessly to contemplate the face of the moon, for so was bred mournfulness, but she still in solitude watched the orb, until tears of grief ran down her cheeks in floods. Then, on the mid-month day of the seventh month rose the full moon, and unutterable grew the misery, and the maidens who served the Lady sought the Ancient and said: "Long has the Lady Kaguya watched the moon, waxing in melancholy with the waxing thereof. and her woe now passes all measure, and sorely she weeps and wails; wherefore we counsel thee to speak with her."

And the Ancient went to her and said: "What hast thou on thy mind, daughter, that ever thou gazest thus sadly on yonder moon's pallid face? Lackest thou aught that may be needed for thy happiness?"

But she answered: "As I gaze upon the moon I am sad because my heart is broken as I consider the wretchedness of this world."

And deeper grew her melancholy each time the Ancient visited her chamber, till sorrow-struck by her distress, he said: "Ah! my darling, my Buddha, why broodest thou thus? what grief oppresses thee?"

"'Tis no grief, save the grief that breaks my heart because of the wretchedness of the world."

"Watch yonder moon no more, daughter; ever art thou gazing upon it, and thus thy woe deepens."

"How may I cease, father, to gaze upon the orb!" said the Lady, and still she watched the moon from its rising to its setting, her face wet with tears the while: but when the nights were moonless, her woe departed from her. Yet as the new moon came and waxed again, the Lady wailed and wept, and her women whispered among themselves that ever deeper grew the misery; but they could not learn the secret of her woe, neither could the Ancient. So the eighth month came in due course, and when the moon was at its full the Lady wept floods of tears, nor essayed she to hide her grief. And again and again her foster-parents prayed her to tell them the cause of her wretchedness. The Lady yielded to their prayer, and said, weeping sorely the while: "Again and again have I willed to tell you all, but I felt assured your hearts would be wrung with grief by my words, and therefore have I forborne till now; and now is the hour come I may no longer abide with you. No maid of this mortal land am I, but the Capital of Moonland is my birth-place. Long ago it was decreed that I should

descend upon this earth, and bide there somewhile; but now is the time at hand when I must go back whence I came, for when yonder orb shall be at its fullest, a company of moonfolk will come down from the sky to bear me away. Well I knew this was my doom, and now ye can understand my misery and wherefore I have wept and wailed so sorely since the spring followed winter."

And as the Lady spoke, again the tears flowed in abundance down her cheeks. But the Ancient said: "What thing is this thou speakest, daughter? I found thee, 'tis true, in the hollow of a bamboo, but no bigger wert thou than a rapeseed, and have we not cherished thee while thou grewest up to full maidenhood? None dare take thee from us, by heaven! I will not let thee go."

And he clamoured, amid his tears, that he was like to die; unbearably piteous 'twas to see his misery. But the Lady answered: "My father and my mother are still numbered among the dwellers in yonder Moonland's capital. It was but for a while I came down to earth, and now many a year has gone by since you found me. So long have I dwelt among you that I have forgotten my father and my mother, and now I look upon you as though I were your very child; nor indeed would I fain do otherwise than remain with you, but, though terrible to me is the thought of quitting you, I may not flee my fate." And she fell to weeping, and the old folk wept also, and her women who had tended her through so many years and watched her grow up into perfect beauty, now hearing they must lose her whom they loved so well, could not swallow their tears, and, oppressed by a like woe, were consumed with grief.

Now the Mikado, hearing of these things, sent a messenger to the Hewer's dwelling, and the Ancient came out to receive him weeping abundantly. So bitter had been his grief that his hair had turned white, and his limbs become bowed, and his eyes blear, and though his years were but fifty, he seemed as if his woe had all at once turned him into an old man.

The messenger inquired if the tidings which had reached His Majesty as to the Hewer's distress were true, and the Ancient, still weeping, answered:

"At the full moon a company from the Moonland capital will come down to bear away our daughter. Deeply grateful am I to His Majesty, who deigns to make inquiry about this matter, and I humbly represent that if at the time of full moon a guard of soldiers be granted us, these Moonfolk, if they make their raid, may all be captured."

The messenger thereupon returned, and reported to the Mikado the plight wherein he found the Ancient.

And the Mikado said: "But a passing glimpse have I had of the Lady Kaguya, yet never shall I lose the memory of her exceeding loveliness; how hard then must it be for those who are wont to see her morning and

evening to lose her!" So orders were given that the captains should be ready by the full moon, and the General Taka no Ōkuni was commanded to take a thousand men from each of the Left and Right Regiments of Royal Guards to protect the Hewer's dwelling against the raid of the Moonfolk. When the two thousand soldiers reached the Ancient's abode, one moiety was posted around it on the earth platform whereon it stood, and the other moiety on the roof of the house, all with bow bent and arrow on string, while the men of the household too were arrayed, and so many were the defenders that no spot remained unguarded, and even within the dwelling the women kept watch and ward, while the Lady was placed in the store-house, surrounded by her attendents, the door whereof the Ancient bolted, and posted himself outside thereof, saying: "Watch and ward thus strict, even Heavenfolk may not win through," and crying to the soldiers on the roof to look out for the first sign of a swoop being made through the air, and slay whatever creature might in this way approach them, whereto they answered: "Have no care, so keen our watch not even a bat shall escape our artillery, and due exposure of its head, by way of punishment, should it venture near our ranks."

And the Ancient was greatly comforted by these words, but the Lady Kaguya said: "Though ye thus surround me and protect me and make ye ready to fight for me, yet ye cannot prevail over the folk of yonder land, nor will your artillery harm them nor your defences avail aught against them, for every door will fly open at their approach, nor may your valour help, for be ye never so stout-hearted, when the Moonfolk come, vain will be your struggle with them."

Then the Ancient was angered, and shouted: "If these Moonfolk come, my nails shall turn into talons to claw out their eyes. I will seize them by their forelocks and twist them off, and trample upon them; their hinder-parts will I tear to pieces; to shame will I put them before the face of these Royal warmen."

But the Lady said: "Make not so great a clamour, lest the warmen hear thee, which were unseemly. Ere long, alas! I shall no longer be within your love, ere long I must know the bitterness of parting, nor can I ever return to show my love and gratitude, for closed to me will be the world's ways. When I went out month after month to watch the waxing moon, I prayed for yet another year to bide with you; but the boon was refused me, and I could but wail and weep as ye saw me. I have beguiled your hearts to love me, and now must quit you; alas, alas! Of that pure essence are these Moonfolk that they know not old age nor ever suffer from any pain or grief, yet fain would I abide with my foster-parents; terrible it is to me to think that ye will grow old with no child to cherish you." So saying, the Lady wept sorely, but the Ancient, restraining his grief, said:

"Nay, daughter, thou must not anger beings so lovely as those thou speakest of."

Meanwhile, the night wore away, and, at the hour of the Rat, behold! a glory fell about the dwelling that exceeded the splendour of noon and was ten times as bright as the brightness of the full moon, so that the smallest hair-pore could be seen on the skin. In the midst thereof came down through the air a company of angels riding on a coil of cloud that descended until it hovered some cubits' height above the ground. And there the angels stood ranked in due order; and when the warmen on guard saw them, a great fear fell upon them, upon those without as upon those within the dwelling, and they had no stomach for fighting. But after a while they rallied; and some bent the bow, but the strength departed from their arms, and they were as though stricken with palsy; and mightier men let fly anon, but the shafts went all astray, and these too could not fight, and thus feeble and bootless proved the vaunted watch and ward of the Royal Warmen.

In shining garments were the angels clad, that had not their like under heaven, and in the midst of them, as they stood in serried ranks upon the cloud, was seen a canopied car hung with curtains of finest woollen fabric, where sat One who seemed to be their lord. And the Archangel turned towards the Hewer's abode, and cried out in a loud voice, "Come thou forth, Miyakko Maro." And the Hewer came forth, staggering like a drunken man, and fell on his face prostrate.

Then the Archangel said, "Thou fool! Some small virtue didst thou display in thy life, and to reward thee was this maiden sent to bide with thee somewhile, and years and years hath she dwelt under thy ward, and heaps and heaps of gold have been bestowed upon thee, and thou hast as it were become a new man. To expiate a fault she had committed was the Lady Kaguya doomed to bide a little while in thy wretched home, and now is the doom fulfilled, and we are come to bear her away from thine earth. Vain is thy weeping and lamentation, render up the girl and delay not."

Then the Ancient answered humbly, "For over a score of years thy servant has cherished the maiden, whereof his lord speaks strangely as being but a little while. Perchance the Lady whom his lord would bear away with him dwells elsewhere; the Lady Kaguya who bides beneath this roof is very sick and may not leave her chamber."

No answer was vouchsafed, but the Car was borne upwards on the cloud till it hovered over the houseroof and a voice cried, "Ho there, Kaguya! how long wouldest thou tarry in this sorry place?"

Thereupon the outer door of the storehouse, wherein stood the Lady Kaguya, flew open and the inner lattice-work, untouched by any hand, slid back and the Lady was seen in the light of the doorway, surrounded by her women, who, understanding that her departure could no longer be stayed, lifted up their hands and wept. But the Lady passed out, and drew nigh to where lay the Hewer, grovelling on the ground, weeping and

stunned with grief, and said: "My fate bids me, father; will you not follow me with your eyes as I am borne away?"

But the Hewer answered: "Why in my misery should I follow thee with my eyes? Let it be done unto me as may be listed, let me be left desolate, let these angels who have come down from the sky to fetch thee bear thee thither with them." And the Ancient refused to be comforted. Then the Lady indited a scroll, seeing that her foster-father was too overcome with grief to listen to her words, and left it to be given him after she had gone, weeping sorely and saying that when her father should yearn after his daughter, the words she had written should be read. And these were the words she wrote: "Had I been born in this land, never should I have quitted it until the time came for my father to suffer no sorrow for his child; but now, on the contrary, must I pass beyond the boundaries of this world, though sorely against my will. My silken mantle I leave behind me as a memorial, and when the moon lights up the night, let my father gaze upon it; now my eyes must take their last look, and I must mount to yonder sky, whence I fain would fall meteor-wise to earth."

Now the Angels brought with them a coffer, wherein were contained a Celestial Feather Robe and a joint of bamboo filled with the Elixir of life, and one of them said to the Lady Kaguya: "Taste, I pray you, of this Elixir, for soiled has your spirit become with the grossnesses of this filthy world."

Then the Lady tasted of the Elixir, and would have privily wrapt up a portion in the mantle she was leaving behind, as a memorial of her; but an Angel stayed her, and drawing forth the Celestial Robe, made ready to throw it over her shoulders, whereupon she said: "Have patience yet awhile; who dons yonder robe changes his heart, and I have still somewhat to say ere I depart." And again she fell to writing, and an Angel said: "'Tis late, and you delay, Lady, overmuch." But she rebuked him, and before all, mournfully and composedly, she wrote on; and the words she wrote were these:

"Your Majesty deigned to send a host to protect your servant, but it was not to be, and now is the misery at hand of departing with those who have come to bear her away with them. Not permitted was it to her to serve your Majesty, and maugre her will was it that she yielded not obedience to the Royal Command, and wrung with grief is her heart thereat, and perchance your Majesty may have thought the Royal will was not understood, and was opposed by her, and so will she appear to your Majesty lacking in good manners, which she would not your Majesty deemed her to be, and therefore humbly she lays this writing at the Royal Feet. And now must she don the Feather Robe and mournfully bid her lord farewell." Then when she had finished writing the scroll, the captain of the host was called, and it was delivered over, together with the bamboo joint containing the Elixir, into his hands, and as he took it, the

Feather Robe was thrown over the Lady Kaguya, and in a trice, all memory of her foster-father's woe vanished, for those who don yonder Robe know sorrow no more. Then the Lady entered the car, surrounded by the company of Angels, and mounted skywards, while the Hewer and his Dame and the women who had served the Lady shed tears of blood, and stood stunned with grief; but there was no help. And the scroll left for the Ancient was read to him, but he said:

"What have I to live for? a bitter old age is mine. Of what profit is my life? whom have I to love?" Nor would he take the Elixir, but lay prostrate on the ground and would not rise.

Meanwhile the Captain of the host returned to the capital with his men, and reported how vain had been the attempt to stay the departure of the Lady Kaguya, and all that had occurred, and gave the scroll, together with the bamboo joint containing the Elixir, to be laid before the Mikado. And His Majesty unrolled the scroll and read it, and was greatly moved, nor would take food nor any diversion. After a while a Grand Council was summoned, and it was inquired which among the mountains of the land towered highest towards heaven. And one said: "In Suruga stands a mountain, not remote from the capital, that towers highest towards heaven among all the mountains of the land." Whereof His Majesty being informed composed a stanza:

Never more to see her!
Tears of grief overwhelm me,
and as for me,
with the Elixir of Life
what have I to do?

And the scroll together with the Elixir was given into the hands of one of the ladies of the palace, and she was charged to deliver them to one Tsuki no Iwakasa, with the injunction to bear them to the summit of the highest mountain in Suruga, that there, standing on the top of the highest peak thereof, he should cause the scroll and the Elixir to be consumed with fire.

So Tsuki no Iwakasa heard humbly the Royal Command, and took with him a company of warriors, and climbed the mountain and did as he had been bidden. And it was from that time forth that the name of Fuji was given to yonder mountain, and men say that the smoke of that burning still curls from its high peak to mingle with the clouds of Heaven.

Finland

INTRODUCTION

FINNISH is one of the three related languages used by the Finns, the Esthonians, and the Hungarians. Although from the earliest days of the Christian era a vast fund of folk-songs, legends, and ballads has been evolved by the Finnish people, there was no clearly-defined or formal literature until toward the middle of the Nineteenth Century, when the famous "synthetic" epic, the *Kalevala*, was constructed or assembled out of the popular legends of the country. This was in 1835. With the appearance of this monument of national literature, and the political separation of the Finns from the Swedes, came a decided impulse toward nationalism. Among the founders of modern Finnish literature were Oksanen, Suondo, and Kivi. These writers, like nearly all who succeeded them, were popular authors: they were concerned largely with the lives and ideas of peasants in the rural communities they knew best.

One of the earliest Finnish writers of tales was Pietari Paivarinta (born 1827). But it is in the work of Juhani Aho that Finland found one of her most powerful and inspired interpreters. In his novels, tales, and poems, he revealed the life and customs of his people with rare charm. Santeri Ingman, one of his contemporaries, and Pakkala, Kilpi, and Maila Talvio, his successors, have likewise taken it upon themselves to create a genuine popular Finnish literature.

JUHANI AHO

(1861–)

JUHANI AHO is one of the most important and imposing figures in modern Finnish literature. The greater part of his life has been dedicated to the writing of novels and stories of his people.

Outlawed is one of his best short novels. It is a particularly skilful example of what a novelist can do within the framework of the short novel form.

The story appears in this volume for the first time in an English translation. It was especially translated by Professor Edwin H. Zeydel.

OUTLAWED

SEE here! I want you to let Junnu alone," cried the master from the other side of the field, directly across the uncut rye.

"Well, we would, if he'd only keep away from us," grumbled the others, as they went on reaping with all their might.

But soon the taunting began again.

Everybody on the farm was in a conspiracy against one lone man. He was a tall, heavy-set, dark-skinned laborer who, without once bending his back, kept cutting his way forward like a whirlwind, always a few paces ahead of the others, utterly ignoring all their taunts. But they were eager to make him furious. They wanted to get him to the point where he would hurl some heavy object at them to give vent to his wrath, as he always did when provoked. In this way they once drove him to seize a tobacco-knife and fling it against the wall. After such a fit of temper he usually retired without uttering a word all day to any one. And when he could find nothing to throw in order to keep them away from him, they treated him like a dummy, and incited the little boys to tease him.

The master was his only protector, for Junnu was a capable worker, reliable in all ways, and good to the horses. Sometimes he helped the girls, too, in feeding the cattle.

Now the fun had begun once more during the noon recess at the edge of the field. Junnu was busy eating his lunch and had laid his hat, pipe and tobacco pouch down on a knoll. Except when he ate, he never parted with them. When he had finished and looked about for these companions he found his hat cocked on a tree stump and his pipe stuck into a crevice

next to it. It looked as if the stump were smoking. This aroused general hilarity, even the master could not refrain from laughing good-naturedly.

Without a word Junnu took his hat and pipe and asked for his pouch.

"Why ask us? Ask the stump!" was the answer, and the laughter grew more boisterous.

The teasing got a new impetus when Tafvo, the laborer, pulled at the pouch, which was pinned to Junnu's own belt in such a way that it dangled on his seat. He could not control himself any longer, and swiftly swung his fist at Tafvo. But Tafvo side-stepped and Junnu bruised his bony fingers against a spruce tree. He panted hard, and his nostrils dilated. But he took his scythe and went to work, some distance away from the others.

"He eats so greedily you could tear his wig from his head without his noticing it," some one behind him remarked.

"Yes, they took that away from him once," drawled Tafvo.

"How was that?" asked another.

"Oh, that was the time he sat behind the heavy walls of Kuopio as a guest of the state."

"You hold your tongue!" commanded the master, driving the people back to work.

But the talk continued.

"What kind deed did he do that won him the invitation of the state?"

"He stole a milk pail. Carried it away from a farmer's hut into the woods and gave it to the other robbers."

"Who told you that?"

"He himself."

"Shut your mouth, you long-legged cur!" Junnu suddenly cried, to the astonishment of all.

"Shut your own mouth, — you wolf's-back."

Junnu had a long back and short legs, and they always called him that.

"Yes, this back took so many cracks of the whip, that the whipper thought he'd never finish his job. 'Shall we begin all over again?' he asked the magistrate, and then Junnu got two rations of whacks for good measure, in addition to a jail sentence. But he didn't make a sound in spite of it."

"Lord knows, he might not even have surrendered to a Cossack's whip."

"Well, I don't know. Suppose it had happened that his own father had used one on him?"

Junnu was illegitimate; this fact had given rise to the malicious rumor that his father was a Russian Cossack who used to live in the village.

"Be quiet now, won't you?" called the master sternly.

"Jesus protect us!" the women cried at the same moment in great consternation, and a wild curse came in unison from the men.

For Junnu had picked up a gigantic rock, lifted it as if it were a strip of birch-bark, and tossed it in the midst of the reapers with a terrible curse, and a face distorted by rage.

The others managed to dodge the stone, but Tafvo stumbled, and the stone struck him on the foot.

"He's killing me, he's killing me!" he bellowed.

"Nonsense! Be sensible, he hasn't hurt your leg at all," said the master, as he examined Tafvo's foot.

"The brute! Tie him, hold him before he gets away from us."

The men dashed straight through the rye toward Junnu. They came to blows with him, but he shook them off with a wild gesture.

"Now let Junnu alone and don't trample down the rye. Away there, and back to work."

"Is our master defending that maniac, who doesn't even care what he hurls? It wasn't his fault he missed my head."

"Then it would have been your own fault. Didn't I warn you?"

"I'll make him pay damages for this — if I have to go to court," growled Tafvo, limping back to his scythe.

"You fellows may quarrel about that as much as you like. There's a limit to taunting," said the master as he turned and left them.

But he shuddered involuntarily as he saw the stone, half buried in the ground. It was so heavy he could scarcely budge it. It was after all providential that it did not do greater damage.

In Junnu's eyes everything trembled in red and yellow streaks, and field and forest danced about. The overexertion had suddenly made him feel sick; he felt so weak he could hardly stand. He sat down a little; his head felt dull. Then he rose and made directly for the forest. Onward he went, without knowing whither. Onward without remembering why. Only after a long walk, when he had reached a fence and vaulted over it, did he realize that he had been on the point of killing a man, and that in throwing the stone he really had had no such intention.

The reapers came home from the field, bathed and had eaten supper. Afterward they had gone to their huts for the night. Only the master was still awake. He was putting his boots up on the top-beam to dry, when Junnu came into the room and sat down on the bench by the wall without saying a word.

"Do you want another bite to eat?" inquired the master; but Junnu was not hungry.

"I'd like to have a word with the master," he said finally, as he noticed that the farmer was barring the doors.

"Well, what have you on your mind that's so important, Junnu?"

"Dismiss me!"

"But what does this mean, Junnu? Now — in midseason? And why?"

"Nothing good will come of my staying in this house."

"Why worry about that stupid, malicious talk? We always used to be able to settle such quarrels."

"Yes, maybe — as far as you were concerned. But I have no peace — and I might easily cause some misfortune."

"Don't you think you ought to try to control your temper a little? Isn't it cruel to use such weapons in a fight?"

"I can't control myself when they keep scoffing at me; I get raging angry — and it goes to my head."

The master stood for a while lost in thought, then sat down on the bench by the table.

"If you and Tafvo can't get along, I'll let him go."

"No, I couldn't stand the looks and remarks of the others anyhow. Of course they hate me — like all honest people."

"What's the use of such talk? You're no worse than any of the rest."

"But, master, you yourself heard what they said."

"Oh, that's just slander, pure and simple!"

"What they said's true enough."

"You haven't been in jail for stealing, have you?"

"Yes, I have. I haven't told it to any one else but Tafvo — that was last winter, up in the hay loft, when he pretended to be my friend. And now I'll tell it to you because you've always been kind to me."

"Certainly, tell me about it if you like."

"Yes I'll tell you," Junnu began, with a break in his voice, panting as though to choke down his tears. "It was this way. They caught me, the beggar boy, in their net and pushed me through the window — they couldn't get in — and made me steal a milk-pail and three loaves of bread, and a butter vat. But I knew them, and I reported them. I never did anything worse. I always lived on my own earnings. But they're all down on me — here as well as at home. Dogs will be dogs. They're the same all over the world."

"But you can't get away from this world."

"I could get out of the way, if you'd help me, Master. I'd ask no wages if you'd only let me have a little piece of land up on the hill."

"A piece of land! And where would that be?"

"I was thinking of a piece up near the waste-lands in the Kontio Forest."

The master made no reply, so Junnu continued:

"I've even picked out a spot — on the shore of Lake Musti . . . and you could fix the rent, Master — any price you wish."

The master could think of no valid objection to letting one of his own laborers live on his land. Indeed, the more he thought about it, the more desirable it seemed to have a man over there near the Forest on the shore of Lake Musti. He was not quite sure, but it seemed at least probable that — he had read about it in the papers! If the fellow insisted on going, why, there was no objection.

"Oh, we can easily agree on the rent," he said, adding: "I shall consider the matter."

"I'd like nothing better than to move out there to-morrow morning. If necessary, I'll furnish a laborer to take my place here."

The master reflected a while longer, and then said as he got up: "Well, I suppose we'll have to give in to you. About the terms we can come to an agreement later." And with that he went out.

Junnu remained seated in the poorly lighted room.

For a long time this thought had been going round in his head. The longer he lived, the less able he was to endure the scorn and heartlessness of his fellows. The feeling that they were all conspiring against him grew more oppressive with the years. He had begun to be distrustful of everything in human nature, of words as well as deeds. He had the notion that every one was pointing a finger at him, wherever he went — at home or in the village. He had tried to win men by kindness, good words and helpfulness. But they had all made a fool of him, like Tafvo, to whom Junnu had confided the story of his life. After the men had smoked the tobacco he had brought from town, and the women had eaten the candy he had bought, and drunk the coffee he had cooked, they were always ready once more to laugh at his appearance and to ridicule his awkwardness and stupidity. And all this merely to drive him into a boundless rage, so that he might commit a deed which would get him into trouble and send him to prison once more. They all coveted possession of his modest savings, which they knew he had earned by floating logs down the river.

All of them had tried to cheat him, all were continually at his throat. And foremost among them were his superiors.

"If you confess you will get off easier," the magistrate had told him that time in court. But it was a lie. When he confessed he was sentenced to the whipping-post. Had his hands been free, he would have choked the man on the bench.

Yes, it was so, what the other prisoners had said, that the poor fellow would never get justice in this world, whatever might be in store for him in heaven. All those distinguished gentlemen of the state had feathered their nests, and the farmers were only their tools and slaves — a motley crowd without much standing in the community!

It was the parson who had softened his heart that time. He said, and repeated it, that anyone who had had sentence passed on him and had paid his penalty honestly was just as good as all the others, who had no right to torture and torment him. He was free to serve as godfather, or even as a witness in court. But that too was a lie. After his release from prison people proceeded to make life still more intolerable for him than ever. Of course it might be true, as the parson had assured him, that if he were not made for men, he *was* made for God. But he did not understand that, and he could not reason it out. Every time he tried, his head began to buzz, and his mind was a blank; he understood nothing.

But this much was now clear to him: he had to get away, away from everything, away for all time. He wanted to escape into the wilderness and hide like a bear in his den. Then he would see if those swine would dare come and pick a quarrel with him.

Impulsively he rose and went out. He would not stay one night more. He got his things from his bunk, put a loaf of bread into his birch bark pouch, and slunk away without being noticed.

He soon left the road and took a footpath that led off to one side.

He followed the fence of the horse pasture, where his namesake — a bay stallion — was pasturing. He had always tended him with loving care, and now the horse neighed softly as he approached. He stopped a moment, stroked him gently, talked to him and tinkled his bell. The horse had been his one friend, the only one that had not spoken an offensive word, in whose eyes he had never seen ill-concealed scorn.

It was a Sunday morning that Junnu moved out to his solitary home. While all the others were at church he had been to see the master without anyone's having noticed it. With his savings he had bought the bay horse, and a verbal agreement was made that if Junnu wished to continue living as a hermit, he should have the right to cultivate the land for ten years on the sole condition that he must pay for his part of the seed. In addition, the master stipulated that if Junnu should decide to come back and live among his fellows, all the buildings on the strip should belong to the farm.

"Come back and live among my fellows after I have once gotten away from them!" Junnu chuckled to himself as he led his horse by the rein — he had not the heart to mount — and went on deeper and deeper into the woods.

How stupid of him not to have realized this dream long ago! But how could he have known that there was one man in this world who was not intent on brushing him aside or making sport of him? To think that he had given up the land for ten years without rent, without making petty conditions and demands! Yes, he would be grateful to this man, ten times over! Of his own free will he would bring him all the produce of the soil he did not need for himself. At the thought of such kindness his heart softened, his chin quivered, and with his rugged hand he had wiped a tear from the corner of his eye.

Swiftly he walked on along the wild, overgrown trails that stretched unbroken past the swamps next to the forest, where scarcely another human foot had ever trodden. He climbed to the top of a high rocky cliff, where he saw nothing but an endless expanse of woods changing to autumn colors, and sleepy swamps lurking behind every thicket.

The world of men is far away, wherever the eye may roam. Behind yonder hills not a sound is heard, and no trace of smoke curls up to give evi-

dence of human habitation. Only from time to time the barking of a hunter's dog can be heard in the distance, or the dull echo of a rifle-shot. But the hunters go their own way. They do not come to disturb his solitude.

As he continued his journey his cautiousness prompted him to pick a handful of moss and muffle the horse's bell with it.

Not even at home in his hut did his soul find peace. For weeks he was tormented by the uneasy fear that "the world" might perchance discover him, even in this hiding-place, that the scoffers might seek him out and come in crowds to haunt him and drive him away. Perhaps Tafvo might make good his threat, and tell the judge about the attempted manslaughter?

All through the autumn months such thoughts worried him.

His hut stood in a valley on the shore of the Lake directly between two steep hills. Near the place he had chosen, there had for many years stood a refuge hut, half dug into the earth, built to give shelter for the night to the charcoal-burners. He had patched its roof and occupied it as a dwelling until his own hut was finished. Later he intended to use it as a stable for his horse.

Even while he was at work making beams and shingles, he seemed to hear plainly the steps of men in the underbrush, to spy someone moving among the trees. He stopped hammering and watched like an escaped convict, motionless and with bated breath, for his pursuers. On Sundays, especially, he feared visitors, and to make doubly sure he left early in the morning for the woods with his nets and snares. And when he returned late in the evening it was like a thief, pausing again and again, intently listening.

But no one came. By the time the snow began to fall, Junnu had a roof over his cabin. On the evening of All-Saints-Day he built his first fire in the new stove.

The flames flickered on the hearth, the burning wood crackled joyfully, and the smoke climbed the walls. Junnu reclined at full length on the bench, pulling at his pipe and gazing at the smoke.

Now he had a roof over his head, and his own walls to protect him. At last he had a place of his own from which he had the right to eject anyone who might come to disturb him. No longer did he have to bow before people or humor them.

If only his old mother were still alive, he could take her into the house with him. This thought suddenly flashed upon him. For a score of years or more he had completely forgotten her. She had been a sort of outcast, and had never known a home of her own. She had died, infamously scourged and persecuted, trodden down by mankind. She was buried during the great famine in a rough-hewn coffin, together with a number of others. Hardly a church bell pealed as she was lowered into the ground.

He had been brutal and hard to her while she lived. But had they not

thrown him into jail, separating mother and son by force? When he was finally released, they had both become the butt of scorn and ridicule. "Look, there comes the wench with her son! Jana's Junnu! Bastard! Jana's Junnu!" From that time on he began to feel ashamed of his mother, and she of him. They went out of their way to avoid one another.

But when she felt the end approaching, she had sent a messenger and asked her son to come and talk to her. Junnu was a wood-cutter at that time, and was ashamed to go to her. Everybody had heard the message. Presently another messenger appeared to ask whether he would not come and see that his mother should have a decent burial. "Let him who will take care of that!" he replied, and did not go.

All that might have been different. Although his mother could have chosen a different sort of life, these thoughts now troubled him. In order to dispel such memories, he went out quickly and busied himself with tying willow strips to his sleigh, to get ready for the winter trips on which he had planned to carry freight, and earn enough money to buy a cow.

He might have found work transporting poles at the other end of his own community. But there he would have come in contact again with those very people whom he had just escaped.

He went to the village in the next district and hired himself out for freight-carrying service.

Half the winter Junnu was busy taking goods from the farther end of the Lake into the interior.

Not a soul knew him there, and no one inquired into his history. Yet he avoided the farms just as if he were in his own home section, kept along the outskirts of the towns and left the other drivers far behind. Except in severe cold weather or during heavy snowfalls, he ate his meals along the roadside, and at night sought shelter only on account of the horse. At the windows, in the yards and at the crossroads, people stared at him, laughed at and ridiculed him. When he took a rest he always retreated to some secluded spot. There he was quite alone, alone with his horse, with which he talked for hours at a time, caressing and pampering him, and helping him over the hills by hitching himself to the sleigh and pulling.

But when Christmas time came the roads began to be more populated, and market people drove from town to town.

Once while he was taking a steep grade with his load, a sleigh full of men in huge fur coats, with red belts round their waists, met him. When they were already upon him they shouted at him to get out of the way. But before he could turn his sleigh aside one of the men on the other sleigh cracked a long whip right over the back of Junnu's stallion. In a rage Junnu leapt from the sled, forgetting his horse which had galloped away in fear, tore up a fence-post from the roadside, and gave chase.

The other sleigh dashed off as fast as the horse could run, but at the next hill Junnu overtook it, and with the strength born of indignation, hurled the post against the sleigh. The passengers dodged just in time, and the post split in two against the dash-board. Junnu, panting with fury, stood behind the sleigh.

On returning, he found his sleigh off the road, beyond the next hill. The horse, quivering and covered with foam, had come to a halt, the pole of the sleigh high up on its back. His fists clenched, sobbing with rage, he shouted curses of vengeance and destruction in the wake of his enemies now well along the quiet road. His fury did not die down until it occurred to him that it was a godsend after all that he did not commit murder. At his next resting-place, where he halted to care for the exhausted horse, he learned that the men had stopped at the same inn, and were probably railway employees. "Let them take care, the scoundrels, that I don't meet them again!"

He felt a longing to get away from the highwaymen and cut-throats, and began to regret the arduousness of his work, and the strain on the horse. Since the pay had been good and he had lost his enthusiasm, he returned home, as always avoiding the villages. At the bottom of the sleigh lay a calf, which he had bought with his earnings.

He had covered her carefully with skins and mats, while he himself perched on the dash-board. The animal, lying there and gazing at him with big bright eyes whenever he turned to stroke her, seemed to him almost like a child. He was in good spirits, hummed to himself and chuckled over his new companion. The nearer he approached home the more vividly did the happy thought come over him: "Now I'll have no suffering or worry. I own a horse, a cow and a cabin. No more worry, no more worry!"

When he reached home he found it almost completely buried under the snow. There was no sign of a road, and no trace of human footsteps. Only the rabbits and partridges had been scampering about on his land.

For Junnu a happy time had begun. The long days of early spring were completely taken up by his own work. He chopped wood; later he took in hay, and prepared beams for his new buildings — a stable and a shed.

One morning his jovial mood was disturbed by the sound of an ax in the woods. No doubt a woodcutter; he would not let him into the house at any price.

Nor did he come. It seemed that he was taking his load to the village along the other shore of the Lake. For many days afterward he did not return. But one day as Junnu was sitting in his sled, the same man drove past and went into the woods without saying a word. Junnu uttered no sound, as he turned his head away. The horse was from the master's farm. It was Tafvo's former truck-horse, but the driver was a stranger.

Day after day the man came, and disappeared in the same way. It seemed as if he did not want to disturb Junnu. Perhaps he was a new laborer, an honest and industrious fellow? The next time they met, Junnu halted his horse and engaged the man in conversation. Tafvo, he heard was going into the service of the state in the spring, to be a railway employee, since the master no longer wanted him, and they could not agree on wages. Junnu took a fancy to the stranger, who was almost polite to him, expressing surprise over his big earnings during the winter. Junnu became more loquacious and chatted merrily about many things — his new buildings, his cabin, and the stable. He asked the stranger to stop again when he came by. The laborer came, showed gratitude and admiration, and spoke to Junnu as though to a master. However searchingly Junnu looked into his eyes, he could not detect a spark of mockery.

One fine Sunday the master himself came over to pay Junnu a visit. He told him he had dropped his own work in order to make the trip, fearing that Junnu had buried himself forever in the snow drifts. Junnu cooked coffee and offered his guest tobacco he had brought from the village. The master had only words of praise for Junnu's house.

"Why, you'll build up a whole farm here, now that you've made such a good start," he exclaimed.

They chatted together about Junnu's undertaking, and deliberated as to the best place for the crops and pastures. The master advised him to plough up all the land between the house and the lake, though Junnu was of the opinion that the land a little farther off might be better for ploughing. The master reminded him that the best land always lies close to the house.

"Is it really true that I might myself be a regular master? Will the others have to treat me like a human being?" Junnu thought to himself after the master had driven home again.

As the season advanced, he set to work all the more eagerly, inspired as he was by proud dreams. He cut a large strip of woodland on the south side of a slope, and enclosed a little group of shade-trees; then he ploughed the land, cleared it of stumps and made a meadow down by the lake. His happiest days were his Sundays, which he spent in the company of his horse. He would canter away over field and moor, sit down beside the horse with lighted pipe, caress him and offer him tidbits, of bread or salt, which he always kept in his pocket.

The shoots of his spring crop came up green and healthy, and ripened beautifully. When he looked at them and thought of this budding young life, the tears stood in his eyes, and his knees shook.

But precisely at such moments a groundless, unfathomable fear crept over him, a fear that something might happen to destroy his happiness. He sought to define such forebodings more clearly. Once in his sleep he saw this unknown danger creeping toward him in the shape of a dark,

leaden bank of clouds, blustering and thundering over the fields, tearing the roof from his house and dashing him headlong to the ground. He thought about the dream later, brooding over its meaning and racking his brain as to the best way of averting the reality.

If only he could be sure that master might not become angry with him for some reason, and drive him away! They had no written contract. He decided to plant his crops where the master had suggested; perhaps it would be just as well there, though of course more troublesome.

Or perhaps the parson might demand a tithe from him because he owned a cow? Or be angry because he never came to the open-air services, or to communion? What if the state should send the tax-collector and demand taxes of him?

So he went to the parson, taking a vat of butter along, and asking permission to come to confession and communion.

On the same trip he paid his taxes, far in advance, to the collector.

No mortal could now disturb him, and no one had a right to persecute him, he thought as he made his way home in the twilight.

He would have welcomed a reconciliation even with Tafvo, if he had only known where to find him. Perhaps his ill-will had abated somewhat, for he had not shown any signs of hostility?

Just as his last fear seemed to have been dispelled, he thought of his mother. Suppose the community should bring suit against him for the cost of her maintenance? Suppose — it should become known that he was the owner of a horse and a cow! Or the good Lord himself might turn upon him in His wrath because he had been so heartless to her while she was alive? He had not even provided for the ringing of the church bells when she died!

He turned back, went to the overseer of the poor, gave him money for the poor-chest — every other form of compensation was refused. Then he went to the village carpenter and ordered a cross for his mother's grave.

At last he felt at ease. The wicked world and he had settled all their differences. No one could now claim power over him or scheme behind his back. Perhaps no one ever had any such intention?

He became almost kindly toward them. Hostility and bitterness gave way, and he refused to put faith in his evil forebodings when they threatened to prevail.

For two years Junnu lived in his cabin amid desolation and swamps; and not a soul came to disturb him.

But in the spring of the third year, sitting one day on the shore of the Lake fishing, he heard a strange noise in the forest. It sounded like the distant blows of an ax. Then he could hear a tree fall. Who would be felling trees at this season? he wondered. A strange sensation took pos-

session of him. He listened more attentively: certainly men were cutting timber over there. The woods resounded all day long, and the next morning it was clear that the workmen were coming even closer. Early on the third day he made his way stealthily up the hill behind the hut, from where he saw a large spruce tree. He could see it sway and then crash to the ground. He had scarcely an instant to draw breath when another fell close at hand. He wondered whether he ought to go over to see what was happening, to learn who the men were? He returned home, perplexed. He could not rid himself of the dark thoughts that beset him as he worked, even late into the night after he had gone to bed. Unable to sleep, he got up and went out into the forest toward the spot where they had been cutting trees.

The wood was deserted, but there were the trees, lying in a long straight line, along which wooden stakes had been driven into the ground.

Strange, the clearing was not parallel with his master's boundary-line: it ran directly through his land. But the woods belonged to him. Had he sold it? Was Junnu to have a neighbor?

As he continued along the line of the clearing he noticed that it wound about the cliff and then ran off in an absolutely straight line as far as the eye could reach. Junnu returned to his hut and, torn between fear and doubt, lay awake until sunrise, unable to find a satisfactory explanation. His work that day seemed to drag. Again and again he caught himself listening intently, and he realized that the sounds were coming closer and closer. At noon on Saturday everything was quiet once more.

On Sunday he went out to the line. It had come somewhat closer, and seemed to be heading for the valley directly toward his hut.

On returning home Monday morning for breakfast from the forest meadow, where he had been building a fence, he heard the axes right behind the field at the edge of the woods. He could distinctly hear men's voices and the song of many axes. Suddenly a tall fir tree crashed down just at the edge of the wood. Two men stepped out into the open field.

As they advanced along the edge of the field toward the hut, Junnu, who had been sitting outside motionless, turned back and went inside to hide, slamming the door behind him. Unable to restrain his curiosity, he peered through the window and saw the men setting up a strange-looking three-legged affair which they pointed first at the woods and then straight at his hut, as if they wanted to shoot him down through his window.

At the same moment someone passed under the window, turned the door-knob and entered. It was Tafvo. He shook hands with Junnu as though he were an old friend, and sat down on the bench.

"I have some rare guests for you to-day, Junnu!"

"Who may they be?" asked Junnu.

"They are surveyors."

"What are they doing here?"

"We are building a railway line."

The door opened and the surveyors entered.

"Good day! How are you!" They greeted him in a matter-of-fact, superior manner. "Well, well, this seems to be a regular little farm. We didn't know there was anything here at all. Are you master here?"

"Yes, both master and mistress; he cultivates the land and keeps a horse and cow," explained Tafvo, while Junnu took up a position modestly behind the stove, and stared at the strangers without knowing what to think. He had no idea what sort of people they were, or what they wanted. Yet it seemed to him as though he recognized them: he must have seen them somewhere.

The two young surveyors took possession of the place as if it were their own, shed their overcoats and laid their things down on benches and boards. Tafvo set a basket of lunch on the table.

"Could we get a little milk here?" they inquired.

"Go out and get some milk for the gentlemen," Tafvo urged.

Junnu obeyed instinctively. Mechanically he poured the milk from a pan into a pitcher, and returning with it from the shed, he cast a glance in the direction of the fallen trees and then at the strange three-legged contrivance in the field; it was still pointing straight at the house. Then he took the milk in to the gentlemen.

Again he took his stand behind the stove, gazed at his guests, and puffed nervously at his pipe.

After the gentlemen had finished their meal, Tafvo told Junnu that a railway line was to be built through the section, that the work would soon be begun — probably that autumn. "It will come through here, right through the place where this hut is now."

"Where the hut is now?" gasped Junnu.

"Yes, you'll have to make room for us,'' said one of the men.

"You'll have to put your crops and meadow somewhere else."

"Somewhere else?"

"Yes, yes, no use grumbling when the state commands."

"The state commands?"

"Yes, when it commands, a man must obey."

There was something scornful in Tafvo's manner, and in his eyes a gleam of malicious joy. Doubtfully Junnu looked now at him and now at the others. Yes, they were the same fellows who had whipped his horse that winter.

Without his asking, Tafvo went on to tell Junnu that he had come from town as the assistant of these gentlemen. A number of people — perhaps twenty in all — were about to start laying the line yonder in the wood. They got good wages — three marks a day, but they had to provide their own food. And once the work had begun he was sure of a job until it was completed. The state, he assured Junnu, was a wonderful provider. If a man had a horse, he could make even more money.

"And you have one, haven't you? You bought the old stallion."

Junnu ignored the question.

"And you have a cow, too. You could get good money for her milk when the work here gets under way. And they'll be at it a long time. Maybe you can get work under the state."

"I don't want it."

"But you may be forced to after they take away your best land and tear down your building to make room for the railroad."

"Suppose I don't let them tear it down?"

"They'll have to tear it down; they can't turn aside from the line that the state has marked out. They have torn down bigger places than yours. They never spare a place or go around it, unless it's a church."

Junnu wanted to avoid a quarrel, so he said nothing to this.

The men were now preparing to leave. They threw a few coppers on the table in payment for the milk, and returned to their tripod, which they now set in the midst of the enclosure. Tafvo drove a stake into the ground at that place, another in Junnu's yard, and a third near the wood at the far end of the field. They had shouted to Junnu before leaving that any one who removed the stakes was subject to a heavy fine. Then they disappeared into the forest.

Other men came with axes, and crossed his field and yard; but they did not see him, as he cowered in his house as though half-paralyzed. He simply stared after them. It was not long before they began to cut trees on the other side of the wood.

Not until they had all left did it begin to dawn on Junnu what had happened.

If it were just a joke there could not have been so many men. Perhaps they were railway men? Maybe the threat was true, and the railroad would go straight through his house, ruining all his buildings and fields? Perhaps hundreds of workmen would come and trample down everything he possessed? It would be like living in the very center of a town.

The whole situation suddenly became clear.

Would he have to go away out into the world among strangers? That he would refuse to do! He would not move from the spot! They might come and try, but his club would smash the skull of anyone who tried to touch him.

The blood rushed to his head. Without asking his leave, they had felled his timber and trampled down his crops. How they bragged as they sat at his table, the arrogant fools, boasted that they would tear down his roof over his head! Why had he not attacked them with the poker? Why had he not given them a farewell that would have warned them never to return?

Maybe he could still overtake them? He made ready for the pursuit, but again he hesitated.

No, not that way. Not by fighting and force. That wasn't necessary. Right was on his side. Just let them try to come. Let them begin the fight. He was not afraid of the government, or its accomplices.

He went out and looked at the stakes they had driven into the ground, tore them up and tossed them into the stove.

Autumn came, and work on the railway had gone on with increasing celerity. The forest reverberated on all sides; dynamite explosions resounded; and the ceaseless noise of stone-cutters' hammers. All day long the shouts of teamsters and the "heave — ho! heave — ho!" of the track layers rang through the woods.

Junnu's hut lay directly between two towns and on its site a large station was to be erected. At this point the trade and commerce of three counties were to converge. The environs of the hut must be cleared of stumps, fields levelled and buildings razed. Junnu had received formal notice to move.

But Junnu had not left the spot: he had no intention of doing so. He noticed nothing of what was going on about him, avoiding the workmen and pretending not to recognize anyone. He refused to sell milk, and to those who asked for lodging he replied that the hut was not large enough even for himself.

He would not even permit the use of his bathroom or out house.

The foremen had instructed him repeatedly to tear down his buildings before All-Saints-Day, otherwise it would be done by the employees of the State, at his expense. Junnu answered that he would not move a finger.

The hut at least must be torn down without delay, since the tracks were to run directly through it.

"Then let the tracks go to one side!"

"No detours permitted."

"You might have chosen some other spot. Who said the tracks must run through here?"

They regarded him as a lunatic, and decided to let him alone until the last possible moment. Maybe in the course of time he would come to his senses, the pig-headed lout!

But Junnu's rancor only increased as the tracks closed in on him from both sides.

When he had finished the summer's work he began to haul lumber. To those who asked what he was doing, he replied that he was planning an addition to his house.

The foremen prevailed upon his old master to have a talk with him.

"Will you indemnify me for the expense of moving and transplanting my crops?" asked Junnu angrily.

"Why should I? Who would force me to?"

"Will the state indemnify me?"

"I don't believe the state will give in to you."

"But what was your idea when you gave me the right to live here for ten years? Are you going to throw me out?"

"For all I care, you may stay here twenty years."

Junnu began to harbor a secret suspicion against his master. His eyes blinked irresolutely; he fidgeted nervously as he stood there talking. Surely he could prevent the insult and injury if he were so minded. but he was in league with the others. He had always been a friend of the high and mighty; that's why he was now hobnobbing with the railway men and hiring out his horses to them.

But let them all be against him! He had justice on his side; he would insist on his rights. He would frighten them away, make them yield and have revenge on them all.

Why did they come and disturb him? He was only minding his own business!

Couldn't they have laid their tracks on one side or the other? Indeed, they would never raze his hut, so long as he could stand on his legs.

They would hardly have made so much fuss over him, had he not had justice on his side. Nor would they have offered him work if they had felt free to take liberties with him.

It was only an empty threat when the foremen had ordered him to clear out! Unless he wanted to be evicted by the magistrate?

All-Saints-Day approached, and work was progressing rapidly. The tracks were close upon him. Roots were being dug out and rocks blown up. The rafters of his house creaked and debris rained against the window panes. Junnu could not leave the house without meeting men everywhere, who seemed to regard him with ill-concealed contempt. Whenever they saw him at a distance they flung sarcastic remarks at him, asking whether he could milk his cow dry, how he managed to keep tab on all his cattle and hired help, and whether he had been awarded the contract for the station?

He lived in a continual state of siege. Finally he dared not even go away from the yard, fearing that in his absence they might come and tear the house down. Only on holidays did he venture to go to the village for flour. When at last his hatred got complete control of him, he never left the house at all except to feed his two animals. All day long he lay on the bench and dozed, or kept stealthy watch over the movements of his enemies.

On the eve of All-Saints-Day he saw Tafvo making for the house. A moment later he was in the room. Junnu was cutting tobacco in a corner, and pretended not to see him. Tafvo remained near the stove, warming his hands.

"They've asked me to tell you that you've got to clear your things out. To-morrow noon they begin tearing the house down . . . It will be well

for you to obey," he added. Junnu made no answer. "You'd only get the worst of it if you tried force."

Junnu kept on cutting. Once he bore down on the board so hard that it creaked.

"How would you like to sell it?" grinned Tafvo, looking about quickly. "I'll buy it if you're willing. A hundred marks cash down. What do you say?"

"No!"

"Well, you can't get a better price from anyone. The magistrate is here and he's just sworn to throw you out if you don't move of your own will. They say they'll blow you up, hut and all, if you keep on being so pig-headed. — Or do you want the police to get their claws on you again?"

"Out with you!" hissed Junnu, leaping up from the bench.

"Very well, I'll go. But you'll soon follow!"

When he saw Junnu brandishing the massive bench as if it were a little stool, he hurried out. Hardly had he closed the door when the bench came crashing against the post and into the vestibule, where it hit an old iron cauldron.

"Give up my house up to a dirty swine like that! It's all his fault. He brought the whole pack here. Without him those strangers would never have come! Now they want to smash my hut? With the help of the magistrate they're going to clear me out of my own home? Let them try it, those ——!"

Before he had a chance to lock the door, the magistrate had entered the room together with one of the foremen.

Junno neither took off his cap nor did he rise from the bench where he crouched. He made no return to their greeting.

"Well, well," he exclaimed with a scornful laugh, "now I suppose they have come to chase me out?"

"It looks as though we might have to do that very thing, if you don't get out of your own free will. But why be so stubborn, Junnu? You'll see, it's no use when the state commands," said the old magistrate soothingly.

"What right has the state to command?"

"The state has bought the land, and the road is going through here; nothing can change that."

"Is that so? But I haven't seen any deed of sale."

"That's not necessary. You are living on another man's land."

"But the house is mine, and I have a right to use the land here for ten years without rent."

"Who gave you that right?" asked the foreman.

"That's the agreement I have with my master."

"Have you any papers?"

"No, I haven't, but that was the agreement."

"Well, my good fellow, the agreement is worthless, since your master owned the land and received payment in full for it."

"He received payment? But I didn't get a penny for my house, and he hasn't made me any offer."

"That is not our affair, so long as your master was the legal owner, and received his money."

"My master? But how could he get money for my house?"

"He got the money, as I just told you. That's an affair to be settled between the two of you. The state has nothing to do with your agreements and differences."

For a while Junnu sat speechless on the bench. Then he got up. "Is it true," he asked, "that he is just as mean a cur as all the rest of you?"

"Do you realize who you are talking to?" cried the magistrate, boiling with rage and coming up close to him.

"With forgers and government robbers! Get out of my house! Out with you all!"

"Junnu, I warn you for the last time."

"Just keep on warning, you liar, you cur!" The words nearly choked him.

"The fellow's crazy. What's the use in quarreling with him?" Turning to the laborers who gathered before the door, the foreman commanded, "Pitch in and rip it down! We have no time for arguing."

"There you have it. Talking won't help you," said the magistrate in a conciliatory tone, making one last effort to win Junnu over.

Yet without realizing anything, or giving heed to any idea but the one uppermost in his mind — that they were determined to drive him out of his home and trample down his fields and possessions — he rushed into the yard past the magistrate, in pursuit of the foreman. The laborers gave way before his onrush, while crowds of curious bystanders pressed in from all sides.

"You'll not tear down my house!" he shouted, pulling up a fence-post.

"Do your duty!" commanded the foreman.

Not a man moved.

"What, are you afraid of one man! Get up on the roof, or I'll discharge the lot of you!" cried the foreman.

"And I'll smash the skull of any one of you who dares to budge!"

"You can't scare us with that sort of talk!" said Tafvo, as he ran up the ladder past Junnu.

Junnu aimed a blow at him, but missed, and when the fence-post in his hand broke in two, he seized the ladder and shook it so furiously that it crashed to the ground. Tafvo, who had just reached the eaves of the roof, came down with it. He uttered a wild cry, then collapsed in an unconscious heap.

At the same moment the magistrate and the foremen seized Junnu by

the nape of the neck. They called others to help them, forced him against the wall and then to the ground, fastened a rope round his arms, and threw him into his own sleigh.

"There, that's what you get for resisting the authorities . . . I'll teach you a lesson, you blockhead!" muttered the magistrate, breathing heavily and tugging at the rope. "Get the horse out of the stable, men!"

The prostrate Junnu saw them lead his horse out of the stable and hitch him to the sleigh. He pulled madly at the rope in an effort to get up, but when he realized that this was impossible, he cowered down, motionless. Lying there, waiting until the magistrate was ready to leave, he saw the ladder set up against his house once again. When the sleigh jolted off rattling over the bare ground, the shingles began to fly from his roof. Some of them, caught by the autumn wind, were carried far off into the neighboring fields.

"At last we've smoked the bear out of his den!" someone behind him chuckled. Scornful shouts just reached his ears.

He was let off with a fine, a bill for damages and several month's imprisonment for violent interference with an official in the performance of his lawful duties. Half a year elapsed between his arrest, and the trial and conviction. It was now early summer.

With head shaved clean and wearing a prisoner's garb, he was taken shortly before St. John's Day from the village lock-up to the county jail, and there given his liberty.

From the jail he made off directly for the wilderness, which still had an irresistible attraction for him.

His horse had been sold to cover the costs of the trial, while the cow had been entrusted to the care of an old woman, who promised to take charge of her during the winter.

Junnu was pale, emaciated and stooped, his brow furrowed with trouble and care. His cheeks were hollow and the bones so protruding, it appeared as though he were continually setting his jaws. His eyes seemed sunk further back into his head, now and then they shone with an uncanny glint.

Neither before the bar nor in the lock-up, nor even on his departure in the company of the well-known trusty, did he have much to say. From the moment they had forced him into his own sleigh, a prisoner, he had maintained a stubborn silence.

During the trial his record was read, and it was clear from this that he had served once before as a thief, and besides was the fatherless son of an unmarried woman. He had not defended himself, nor made any attempt to refute the witnesses. Neither a denial nor a confession had come from his lips. When his master explained to the judge that this man's mentality had always been considered inferior — he was subject to violent fits of temper for no reason at all — Junnu allowed the fellow to talk on. The others believed everything.

At that time dark passions began to rise within him, which were not quelled by the months of imprisonment in the lonely cell.

His rancor did not make him feel dizzy any more, and his mind did not become blank, as it used to do. No, this resentment was stored up in a secret corner of his heart. There it lay and grew and was assimilated in his blood and embedded in his soul.

He made up his mind to burn down his master's buildings, to slay Tafvo and the magistrate, shoot the railway men from ambush in the woods, and wreak vengeance on all who had cheated him of his money and his farm, tortured and mocked and hunted him like a wild beast.

The master had flattered him and praised his farm, only to get twice as much indemnity from the state. And Tafvo had triumphed over him. They had all laughed at and scorned him in his misfortune.

No, there was no justice to be found among men. They were all wolves, savage curs, who devour and tear to shreds whomever they lay hands on, draining the last drop of blood from their victims' body.

But he would have revenge, revenge — even if he should die in the attempt!

While his thoughts ran on thus, his eyes flashed wildly and his teeth ground with rage.

Without realizing it, he walked onward through the meadow, straight into the wilderness. But his strength had been sapped by the long months in prison, and he had to pause by the wayside to catch his breath. He felt the pangs of hunger, and wanted to smoke. He had had no tobacco for months.

His rancor left him for a moment, his passion for revenge was dissipated, and the tension of his mind relieved.

What had he done that men were so cruel to him, that the world trampled on him thus? Had he not always tried to be obliging and helpful to those he was said to have sinned against? Had he not always left others alone, even avoided them? Was it not he who had always turned off the road and given others the right of way? Why should they attack him?

And yet — if he could only, in spite of everything, flee to some place where no one would see or hear him, get another horse and build another hut!

But how was he to know that they would not again destroy everything and overpower him, tie him with ropes, and throw him into jail? And they might take his cow, too? Perhaps she had been stolen already? This thought hastened his footsteps in the direction where he hoped to find her.

The night was cool and damp, and the trees with their young foliage, looked as though they trembled. He knew every inch of the way, for he used to travel this road often. But nothing seemed as it was in the old days. The farther he penetrated into the forest, the wider the path became. Everywhere the woods were devastated. The cow-path had been torn up

and deeply rutted by wagons. The wheels had scraped the very bark from the trees. Bridges extended over the swamps, and along the roadside lay the trunks of mighty spruce trees.

And suddenly it seemed to him as though all these tracks and symbols of destruction led away, as though men had fled in tumultuous haste with their carts, and had gone in terror straight into some abyss. They had dropped their work, driven thence by a magic power, giving them no rest by night and no peace by day. The wild spirits of the forest had hurled rocks down from the cliffs into the valley, destroying by night everything that men had toiled at by day, and building up again what men had destroyed — Junnu's little hut and shed! And now the men had been driven off in a mad, headlong rush, so that the weak and infirm were swept beyond the edge, down to where the wreckage of wagons, sleighs, wheels, axles and horses' skeletons, lay in a jumbled mass.

As darkness came on, Junnu gloated over this spectacle. He wanted to make sure that all the men had gone. Urged on by his impatience, he hurried along aimlessly, as though mysterious voices were whispering in his ear. He left the path and headed straight through the woods in the direction of Lake Musti.

How often had he had such visions during the sleepless nights of his imprisonment! He had seen in his mind's eye the road getting broader and the woods receding, horses and men dragging off rocks and trees in long rows, men digging roots and blowing up rocks, climbing onto his roof, tearing down the rafters and scattering the shingles to the winds. Often he had seen his stove standing deserted among the ruins, as though they had gone through a destructive fire.

When he came out of the dark wood, a scene of desolation suddenly confronted him.

The railway was finished, the ties laid, the ditches dug, the tracks in place, and up on them, directly in front of him, was a row of sand-cars and a belching, puffing locomotive.

Fatigued and scarcely able to stand, he trudged on along the tracks toward his hut. Out in the meadow were piles of building stones and wheelbarrows turned up on end.

He scanned the familiar field for his house, but could see nothing of it. The field was covered with sand. There was not a trace of his hut, his stable, or the beams for the new bathroom and shed. In their stead was only a foundation, probably for a new house. The only relic of his former possessions was a piece of the ladder.

Fear overcame him. He felt as though a host of invisible evil spirits were haunting him, lurking in the woods, stretching out their arms to catch him by the hair, rustling and whispering about him. He was ready to dart away into the wilderness, when he perceived not far off the windows and doors of countless houses, all in a row. From that direction

came the locomotives. He ran down to the shore of the Lake. Hardly had he crossed the tracks, where the loose gravel grated under his feet, when he discovered that he was standing in front of his old bath-house. There he paused.

It seemed to be inhabited. Through a crack in the door he heard snoring within, and as he peered into the room he spied an old woman lying on the floor in front of the fire, asleep. It was the woman who had charge of Junnu's cow.

"The cow? Where is my cow?"

"She's probably still at her feed," said the woman, sleepily. "They've allowed this old shack to stay for a while, though they've threatened to tear it down. They'll get around to it as soon as they've finished their other jobs. They're talking of opening the road on St. John's Day, you know. — Yes, they ripped your house down, and your master sold the walls to Tafvo, who moved them a bit farther into the woods. They say he sells brandy there, and has got mighty rich into the bargain. You can find your horse out at his place, too. The loafer went and bought it at auction for fifty marks. — Yes, this world harbors a lot of mean scoundrels," she added by way of consolation, as she saw Junnu crouching in the corner, his elbows resting on his knees. "They steal everything from a man, everything he owns, his property and house. That's what they did to you. They tear down the hut that another man has built, and sell his only horse. If your master had had his way, he would have let them take the hay you made on your place, but I wouldn't.

"Yes, your cow is safe up there. In the evening she goes from here to the night pasture. You can't let her out without watching her, except at night, ever since these confounded locomotives started to run. The cows don't seem to realize they're more dangerous than a horse; two have already been run down this summer. And a person doesn't get any compensation for the loss, either. Every one is supposed to watch his own cattle."

"Who told you to stay here?"

"It didn't seem wise to move away. I get a good price for the milk."

"Do you sell milk to them?"

"Yes, they made me. They said they had a right to it. Besides, your hay was here."

"Where does Omena go for the night pasture?"

"Not far. Over there behind the tracks with the other cows. You ought to be able to hear her bell. You can find her easy enough. — I'd like to offer you a little breakfast coffee if I may."

But Junnu could not wait. He got up and hurried to the woods, where he disappeared among the trees.

Day was already beginning to dawn over the ridge. There was bustling and noise everywhere.

Junnu walked along the tracks, listening. Then he went off a way and returned. It seemed as though he could not make up his mind to stay near them.

Not one day longer would he remain in this place. He could find his cow, tie a rope to her and be on his way before anyone noticed him. Then his road might lead him whither it would, into the wilderness, or to some other district — only away from here, far away. This neighborhood seemed haunted.

He had not gone far when he suddenly heard the tinkling of a familiar bell. He paused, then went on.

He came to a small field. He knew it well: last summer he had burned charcoal there, and sowed his oats. In the fields stood the horse that was once his own. He was lean now and wasted. His winter hide had not been clipped, and was worn off in places. His back was swollen, and here and there the bare flesh showed through. The corners of his mouth were jagged and torn, and his head drooped. He seemed to recognize his old master, but could not go to him because of the tether. He neighed softly and rubbed his head against Junnu's sleeve.

"What have they done to you, the dirty beasts! The dogs!" mourned Junnu in a voice that was hardly audible.

And forgetting that he was no longer the rightful owner, he seized the animal by the halter and led him off.

"Hey there, fellow — trying to steal my horse?" a voice cried from the woods.

It was Tafvo.

As he recognized Junnu, he started back in astonishment, but noticing that Junnu was unarmed (he himself had an ax), he took courage and hurried up. "Get away from my horse!" he ordered, swinging his ax and tugging at the halter.

Junnu let go. Standing still a moment, helpless and weak, he was clearly in no mood to quarrel. Tafvo dealt him a blow in the ribs; Junnu tottered and fell.

Tafvo mounted the horse, dug him in the flanks and rode off.

Junnu had no strength left to give chase. He did not even feel bitter, as he let the other man, cantering across the field, call him a horse-thief and bandit and threaten him with a new law-suit. At last Tafvo's voice died away in the forest.

"Now faster, you dumb beast!" he heard Tafvo shout to his horse.

"Ah yes, it's his," thought Junnu drowsily. "Everything belongs to them . . . they can do as they like."

He collapsed, as all thought of resistance left him . . .

The morning sun shone brightly into his eyes as it rose over the edge of the woods. He felt dizzy and lay in a sleepy torpor on the ground, forgetting his cow, his intended flight — everything besides.

Scarcely had he opened his eyes again when a shrill whistle was heard. It struck him like the crack of a whip. He heard a rattling and a clattering of iron chains. Was he still in jail, or was he dreaming all this?

When he at last realized that it was the locomotive that was approaching, he thought again of his cow, and darted away toward the tracks, as if to prevent some unknown catastrophe, avert some danger.

A small herd of cows stood beyond the tracks, close to the right of way. Junnu recognized the foremost among them as his own. It seemed as though she wanted to come over to him. She raised her head, lowed, and began to trot. The bell on her neck tinkled with every bound.

But as she neared the tracks and was on the point of climbing the embankment, the locomotive at the curve whistled, racing along in its mad course.

The cow stopped right on the tracks, stared at the approaching object, and stood motionless, riveted to the spot.

The whistle blew frantically, but the engine could not stop.

Junnu dashed up, gesticulating, and shouting as loudly as he could. He seized the cow by the horns, but she resisted when he tried to drag her. He got her halfway over when the engine, amid the curses and threats of the engineer and the grating of the brakes, struck the animal, severing the carcass before his very eyes.

The festive train, all bedecked with pennants, stopped on St. John's Day at Musti Lake station. The half-finished building was gayly decorated with foliage. This was the first train on the new road — a holiday train. The railway company had invited as its guests all the employees and officials of the road, and as its guests of honor all the prominent men of the surrounding districts.

No one had seen or heard anything of Junnu since the engine had killed his cow. He himself, it was said, had gone on to the village. But now and then the engineers of the freight trains reported that they had spied him slinking about at the border of the forest near the tracks.

At a point where the road, after passing the station, suddenly makes a sharp curve and continues between cliffs and past a bog, a man crouched on his knees and attempted to rip a rail from the tie. Covered with sweat, he cast furtive glances toward the station, he tried with violent blows of the ax to shatter the spike. This failing he used a birch-pole as a lever to pry the rail loose from the tie.

He had saved up his last bit of energy for the task. All his enemies, all his persecutors and tormentors, the railway men, the magistrate, his old master, Tafvo, the laborers, the locomotive and its engineer — they as well as all the others who had been allied against him must be destroyed at one blow, hurled into one common grave — the miry, bottomless bog.

That was his plan. It had taken shape during those days while he

roamed about in the forest, with hunger gnawing at his vitals, enticed from his lair only by the locomotive as it rushed past, and drawn irresistibly down to the tracks, where he had made careful observations. At night he had stolen thither and examined the tracks to see how they were put together. And he had heard the laborers discussing the holiday train that was to run on St. John's Day. . . .

If he only had a crowbar and a sledge-hammer — then he could do the work in a moment . . .

The spike refused to budge.

But he *must* finish the job, he *must!*

The locomotive chugged and snorted at the station. The people gathered in a black mass, got into the cars with shouts of exultation. Now the band struck up, so that the whole forest resounded.

Applying all his strength, he smote the spike with his ax. At last the head of the spike broke off. He pried his pole under the rail. It moved a little. But the other spike was still in place, and the rail sprang back into its proper position.

The engine whistled just before it left the station — a long, shrill shriek.

The second spike was just as firm as the other. Junnu feared he might not be able to shatter it until the train had passed — passed in safety.

Was he to postpone it until some other time? No, he would not; he could not. It must be done now, this moment. All his torments should be avenged now.

He seized the ax and began once more to pound the iron. The ax struck a stone. Sparks flew in all directions — and the ax was damaged beyond hope of repair. The train was now quite close, and the pounding of the pistons could be heard with the utmost distinctness.

He took up the pole again, slipped it under the rail, and threw the whole weight of his body against it. The rail loosened, the tie cracked, and the spike came out.

Now, now they will not escape from his clutch!

But as he threw his body against the pole once more, the pole broke and threw him onto the tracks. Burning with fury, he jumped up, grasped the rail with his hands, clawed it with his fingers, gripped the spike with his teeth. He no longer realized what he was doing . . .

The engine was now directly behind his back.

It would get away from him; everyone would be saved, and continue their journey over his mangled corpse . . .

Never!

He ran off to one side, saw the engine with its fluttering pennants and gleaming eyes of glass, thundering and tearing onward. A new idea came to him in a flash.

He stooped down, his arm around a huge boulder. This he raised aloft, and struggled toward the tracks. He shut his eyes, brandished the

boulder and hurled it at the onrushing locomotive. Hearing a terrific crash, he tottered and fell in a faint to the ground.

When he regained his senses he realized that he was flat on his back. The floor he lay on was in motion, and about him was a crowd of excited people, all talking and gesticulating at the same time. He saw the railway men, the magistrate, his master, and Tafvo. His head ached; the blood trickled down over his face.

The locomotive uttered a long, shrill, exulting whistle, a cloud of black smoke curled by, and Junnu knew that he was aboard the holiday train. It bore him on and on, to the city ——

Russia

INTRODUCTION

IN THE case of Russia, as in that of several other countries, it is possible to trace the beginnings of literature to a remote epoch, but so far as formal written narrative is concerned, it is not until the Nineteenth Century that we find any sort of consistent development of the art of story-writing. Nikolai Gogol (1799–1837) is usually considered the founder of the modern Russian novel and the short story. "We are all," wrote Dostoievsky, "descended from Gogol's *Cloak*." *The Cloak* is one of Gogol's finest stories. Lermontov and Pushkin followed shortly after, developing the more romantic type of tale. With Turgenev and Tolstoy and Dostoievsky, the Russian novel reached its highest point of development. These writers were primarily novelists, though the first two, in particular, made use of the shorter form for some of their finest work. Turgenev, above all, wrote many of his most beautiful stories in the short novel form.

The later Russians are more especially identified with the development of the short story form: Chekhov, Gorky, Garshin, Korolenko, in particular, have excelled as masters of the episode. Of them all, Gorky stands supreme as master of the short novel, as Chekhov stands supreme in the realm of the short story.

IVAN TURGENEV

(1818–1883)

Ivan Turgenev was born at Orel, Russia, in 1818. His early education was received in his native land. Although the greater part of his life was spent in Paris, his novels and stories are concerned exclusively with his own people. He was one of the greatest of all Russian writers.

Turgenev wrote a number of short novels. *A Lear of the Steppes* is one of his most affecting and powerful works. It was written at Weimar in 1870.

The translation that follows was made by Constance Garnett, and is reprinted from the volume *A Lear of the Steppes*, etc., London and New York, 1914, by special arrangement with the publishers, William Heinemann, Ltd., of London, The Macmillan Co., of New York, and of the translator.

A LEAR OF THE STEPPES

WE WERE a party of six, gathered together one winter evening at the house of an old college friend. The conversation turned on Shakespeare, on his types, and how profoundly and truly they were taken from the very heart of humanity. We admired particularly their truth to life, their actuality. Each of us spoke of the Hamlets, the Othellos, the Falstaffs, even the Richard the Thirds and Macbeths — the two last only potentially, it is true, resembling their prototypes — whom he had happened to come across.

"And I, gentlemen," cried our host, a man well past middle age, "used to know a King Lear!"

"How was that?" we questioned him.

"Oh, would you like me to tell you about him?"

"Please do."

And our friend promptly began his narrative.

I

All my childhood (he began), and early youth, up to the age of fifteen, I spent in the country, on the estate of my mother, a wealthy landowner in X —— province. Almost the most vivid impression, that has remained in my memory of that far-off time, is the figure of our nearest neighbour, Martin Petrovitch Harlov. Indeed it would be difficult

for such an impression to be obliterated: I never in my life afterwards met anything in the least like Harlov. Picture to yourselves a man of gigantic stature. On his huge carcase was set, a little askew, and without the least trace of a neck, a prodigious head. A perfect haystack of tangled yellowish-grey hair stood up all over it, growing almost down to the bushy eyebrows. On the broad expanse of his purple face, that looked as though it had been peeled, there protruded a sturdy knobby nose, diminutive little blue eyes stared out haughtily, and a mouth gaped open that was diminutive too, but crooked, chapped, and of the same colour as the rest of the face. The voice that proceeded from this mouth, though hoarse, was exceedingly strong and resonant. . . . Its sound recalled the clank of iron bars, carried in a cart over a badly paved road; and when Harlov spoke, it was as though some one were shouting in a high wind across a wide ravine. It was difficult to tell just what Harlov's face expressed, it was such an expanse. . . . One felt one could hardly take it all in at one glance. But it was not disagreeable — a certain grandeur indeed could be discerned in it, only it was exceedingly astounding and unusual. And what hands he had — positive cushions! What fingers, what feet! I remember I could never gaze without a certain respectful awe at the four-foot span of Martin Petrovitch's back, at his shoulders, like mill-stones. But what especially struck me was his ears! They were just like great twists of bread, full of bends and curves; his cheeks seemed to support them on both sides. Martin Petrovitch used to wear — winter and summer alike — a Cossack dress of green cloth, girt about with a small Tcherkess strap, and tarred boots. I never saw a cravat on him; and indeed what could he have tied a cravat round? He breathed slowly and heavily, like a bull, but walked without a sound. One might have imagined that having got into a room, he was in constant fear of up-setting and overturning everything, and so moved cautiously from place to place, sideways for the most part, as though slinking by. He was possessed of a strength truly Herculean, and in consequence enjoyed great renown in the neighbourhood. Our common people retain to this day their reverence for Titanic heroes. Legends were invented about him. They used to recount that he had one day met a bear in the forest and had almost vanquished him; that having once caught a thief in his beehouse, he had flung him, horse and cart and all, over the hedge, and so on. Harlov himself never boasted of his strength. "If my right hand is blessed," he used to say, "so it is God's will it should be!" He was proud, only he did not take pride in his strength, but in his rank, his descent, his common sense.

"Our family's descended from the Swede Harlus," he used to maintain. "In the princely reign of Ivan Vassilievitch the Dark (fancy how long ago!) he came to Russia, and that Swede Harlus did not wish to be a Finnish count — but he wished to be a Russian nobleman, and he was

inscribed in the golden book. It's from him we Harlovs are sprung! . . . And by the same token, all of us Harlovs are born flaxen-haired, with light eyes and clean faces, because we're children of the snow!"

"But, Martin Petrovitch," I once tried to object, "there never was an Ivan Vassilievitch the Dark. There was an Ivan Vassilievitch the Terrible. The Dark was the name given to the great prince Vassily Vassilievitch."

"What nonsense will you talk next!" Harlov answered serenely; "since I say so, so it was!"

One day my mother took it into her head to commend him to his face for his really remarkable incorruptibility.

"Ah, Natalia Nikolaevna!" he protested almost angrily; "what a thing to praise me for, really! We gentlefolk can't be otherwise; so that no churl, no low-born, servile creature dare even imagine evil of us! I am a Harlov, my family has come down from" — here he pointed up somewhere very high aloft in the ceiling — "and me not be honest! How is it possible?"

Another time a high official, who had come into the neighbourhood and was staying with my mother, fancied he could make fun of Martin Petrovitch. The latter had again referred to the Swede Harlus, who came to Russia . . .

"In the days of King Solomon?" the official interrupted.

"No, not of King Solomon, but of the great Prince Ivan Vassilievitch the Dark."

"But I imagine," the official pursued, "that your family is much more ancient, and goes back to antediluvian days, when there were still mastodons and megatheriums about."

These scientific names were absolutely meaningless to Martin Petrovitch; but he realised that the dignitary was laughing at him.

"May be so," he boomed, "our family is, no doubt, very ancient; in those days when my ancestor was in Moscow, they do say there was as great a fool as your excellency living there, and such fools are not seen twice in a thousand years."

The high official was in a furious rage, while Harlov threw his head back, stuck out his chin, snorted and disappeared. Two days later, he came in again. My mother began reproaching him. "It's a lesson for him, ma'am," interposed Harlov, "not to fly off without knowing what he's about, to find out whom he has to deal with first. He's young yet, he must be taught." The dignitary was almost of the same age as Harlov; but this Titan was in the habit of regarding every one as not fully grown up. He had the greatest confidence in himself and was afraid of absolutely no one. "Can they do anything to me? Where on earth is the man that can?" he would ask, and suddenly he would go off into a short but deafening guffaw.

II

My mother was exceedingly particular in her choice of acquaintances, but she made Harlov welcome with special cordiality and allowed him many privileges. Twenty-five years before, he had saved her life by holding up her carriage on the edge of a deep precipice, down which the horses had already fallen. The traces and straps of the harness broke, but Martin Petrovitch did not let go his hold of the wheel he had grasped, though the blood spurted out under his nails. My mother had arranged his marriage. She chose for his wife an orphan girl of seventeen, who had been brought up in her house; he was over forty at the time. Martin Petrovitch's wife was a frail creature — they said he carried her into his house in the palms of his hands — and she did not live long with him. She bore him two daughters, however. After her death, my mother continued her good offices to Martin Petrovitch. She placed his elder daughter in the district school, and afterwards found her a husband, and already had another in her eye for the second. Harlov was a fairly good manager. He had a little estate of nearly eight hundred acres, and had built on to his place a little, and the way the peasants obeyed him is indescribable. Owing to his stoutness, Harlov scarcely ever went anywhere on foot: the earth did not bear him. He used to go everywhere in a low racing droshky, himself driving a rawboned mare, thirty years old, with a scar on her shoulder, from a wound which she had received in the battle of Borodino, under the quartermaster of a cavalry regiment. This mare was always somehow lame in all four legs; she could not go at a walking pace, but could only change from a trot to a canter. She used to eat mugwort and wormwood along the hedges, which I have never noticed any other horse do. I remember I always used to wonder how such a broken-down nag could draw such a fearful weight. I won't venture to repeat how many hundred-weight were attributed to our neighbour. In the droshky behind Martin Petrovitch's back perched his swarthy page, Maximka. With his face and whole person squeezed close up to his master, and his bare feet propped on the hind axle bar of the droshky, he looked like a little leaf or worm which had clung by chance to the gigantic carcase before him. This same page boy used once a week to shave Martin Petrovitch. He used, so they said, to stand on a table to perform this operation. Some jocose persons averred that he had to run round his master's chin. Harlov did not like staying long at home, and so one might often see him driving about in his invariable equipage, with the reins in one hand (the other he held smartly on his knee with the elbow crooked upwards), with a diminutive old cap on the very top of his head. He looked boldly about him with his little bear-like eyes, shouted in a voice of thunder to all the peasants, artisans, and tradespeople he met. Priests he greatly disliked, and he would send vigorous abjurations after them when he met them. One day on overtaking

me (I was cut for a stroll with my gun), he hallooed at a hare that lay near the road in such a way that I could not get the roar and ring of it out of my ears all day.

III

My mother, as I have already stated, made Martin Petrovitch very welcome. She knew what a profound respect he entertained for her person. "She is a real gentlewoman, one of our sort," was the way he used to refer to her. He used to style her his benefactress, while she saw in him a devoted giant, who would not have hesitated to face a whole mob of peasants in defence of her; and although no one foresaw the barest possibility of such a contingency, still, to my mother's notions, in the absence of a husband — she had early been left a widow — such a champion as Martin Petrovitch was not to be despised. And besides, he was a man of upright character, who curried favour with no one, never borrowed money or drank spirits; and no fool either, though he had received no sort of education. My mother trusted Martin Petrovitch: when she took it into her head to make her will, she asked him to witness it, and he drove home expressly to fetch his round iron-rimmed spectacles, without which he could not write. And with spectacles on nose, he succeeded, in a quarter of an hour, with many gasps and groans and great effort, in inscribing his Christian name, father's name, and surname and his rank and designation, tracing enormous quadrangular letters, with tails and flourishes. Having completed this task, he declared he was tired out, and that writing for him was as hard work as catching fleas. Yes, my mother had a respect for him . . . he was not, however, admitted beyond the dining-room in our house. He carried a very strong odour about with him; there was a smell of the earth, of decaying forest, of marsh mud about him. "He's a forest-demon!" my old nurse would declare. At dinner a special table used to be laid apart in a corner for Martin Petrovitch, and he was not offended at that, he knew other people were ill at ease sitting beside him, and he too had greater freedom in eating. And he did eat too, as no one, I imagine, has eaten since the days of Polyphemus. At the very beginning of dinner, by way of a precautionary measure, they always served him a pot of some four pounds of porridge, "else you'd eat me out of house and home," my mother used to say. "That I should, ma'am," Martin Petrovitch would respond, grinning.

My mother liked to hear his reflections on any topic connected with the land. But she could not support the sound of his voice for long together. "What's the meaning of it, my good sir!" she would exclaim; "you might take something to cure yourself of it, really! You simply deafen me. Such a trumpet-blast!"

"Natalia Nikolaevna! benefactress!" Martin Petrovitch would rejoin,

as a rule, "I'm not responsible for my throat. And what medicine could have any effect on me — kindly tell me that? I'd better hold my tongue for a bit."

In reality, I imagine, no medicine could have affected Martin Petrovitch. He was never ill.

He was not good at telling stories, and did not care for it. "Much talking gives me asthma," he used to remark reproachfully. It was only when one got him on to the year 1812 — he had served in the militia, and had received a bronze medal, which he used to wear on festive occasions attached to a Vladimir ribbon — when one questioned him about the French that he would relate some few anecdotes. He used, however, to maintain stoutly all the while that there never had been any Frenchmen, real ones, in Russia, only some poor marauders, who had straggled over from hunger, and that he had given many a good drubbing to such rabble in the forests.

IV

AND yet even this self-confident, unflinching giant had his moments of melancholy and depression. Without any visible cause he would suddenly begin to be sad; he would lock himself up alone in his room, and hum — positively hum — like a whole hive of bees; or he would call his page Maximka, and tell him to read aloud to him out of the solitary book which had somehow found its way into his house, an odd volume of Novikovsky's *The Worker at Leisure*, or else to sing to him. And Maximka, who by some strange freak of chance, could spell out print, syllable by syllable, would set to work with the usual chopping up of the words and transference of the accent, bawling out phrases of the following description: "but man in his wilfulness draws from this empty hypothesis, which he applies to the animal kingdom, utterly opposite conclusions. Every animal separately," he says, "is not capable of making me happy!" and so on. Or he would chant in a shrill little voice a mournful song, of which nothing could be distinguished but: "Ee . . . eee . . . ee . . . a . . . ee . . . a . . . ee . . . Aaa . . . ska! O . . . oo . . . oo . . . bee . . . ee . . . ee . . . ee . . . la!" While Martin Petrovitch would shake his head, make allusions to the mutability of life, how all things turn to ashes, fade away like grass, pass — and will return no more! A picture had somehow come into his hands, representing a burning candle, which the winds, with puffed-out cheeks, were blowing upon from all sides; below was the inscription: "Such is the life of man." He was very fond of this picture; he had hung it up in his own room, but at ordinary, not melancholy, times he used to keep it turned face to the wall, so that it might not depress him. Harlov, that colossus, was afraid of death! To the consolations of religion, to prayer, however, he rarely had recourse in

his fits of melancholy. Even then he chiefly relied on his own intelligence. He had no particular religious feeling; he was not often seen in church; he used to say, it is true, that he did not go on the ground that, owing to his corporeal dimensions, he was afraid of squeezing other people out. The fit of depression commonly ended in Martin Petrovitch's beginning to whistle, and suddenly, in a voice of thunder, ordering out his droshky, and dashing off about the neighbourhood, vigorously brandishing his disengaged hand over the peak of his cap, as though he would say, "for all that, I don't care a straw!" He was a regular Russian.

V

STRONG men, like Martin Petrovitch, are for the most part of a phlegmatic disposition; but he, on the contrary, was rather easily irritated. He was specially short-tempered with a certain Bitchkov, who had found a refuge in our house, where he occupied a position between that of a buffoon and a dependant. He was the brother of Harlov's deceased wife, had been nicknamed Souvenir as a little boy, and Souvenir he had remained for every one, even the servants, who addressed him, it is true, as Souvenir Timofeitch. His real name he seemed hardly to know himself. He was a pitiful creature, looked down upon by every one; a toady, in fact. He had no teeth on one side of his mouth, which gave his little wrinkled face a crooked appearance. He was in a perpetual fuss and fidget; he used to poke himself into the maids' room, or into the counting-house, or into the priest's quarters, or else into the bailiff's hut. He was repelled from everywhere, but he only shrugged himself up, and screwed up his little eyes, and laughed a pitiful mawkish laugh, like the sound of rinsing a bottle. It always seemed to me that had Souvenir had money, he would have turned into the basest person, unprincipled, spiteful, even cruel. Poverty kept him within bounds. He was only allowed drink on holidays. He was decently dressed, by my mother's orders, since in the evenings he took a hand in her game of picquet or boston. Souvenir was constantly repeating, "Certainly, d'rectly, d'rectly." "D'rectly what?" my mother would ask, with annoyance. He instantly drew back his hands, in a scare, and lisped, "At your service, ma'am!" Listening at doors, backbiting, and, above all, quizzing, teasing, were his sole interest, and he used to quiz as though he had a right to, as though he were avenging himself for something. He used to call Martin Petrovitch brother, and tormented him beyond endurance. "What made you kill my sister, Margarita Timofeevna?" he used to persist, wriggling about before him and sniggering. One day Martin Petrovitch was sitting in the billiard-room, a cool apartment, in which no one had ever seen a single fly, and which our neighbour, disliking heat and sunshine, greatly favoured on this account. He was sitting between the wall and the billiard-table.

Souvenir was fidgeting before his bulky person, mocking him, grimacing. . . . Martin Petrovitch wanted to get rid of him, and thrust both hands out in front of him. Luckily for Souvenir he managed to get away, his brother-in-law's open hands came into collision with the edge of the billiard-table, and the billiard-board went flying off all its six screws. . . . What a mass of batter Souvenir would have been turned into under those mighty hands!

VI

I HAD long been curious to see how Martin Petrovitch arranged his household, what sort of a home he had. One day I invited myself to accompany him on horseback as far as Eskovo (that was the name of his estate). "Upon my word, you want to have a look at my dominion," was Martin Petrovitch's comment. "By all means! I'll show you the garden, and the house, and the threshing-floor, and everything. I have plenty of everything." We set off. It was reckoned hardly more than a couple of miles from our place to Eskovo. "Here it is — my dominion!" Martin Petrovitch roared suddenly, trying to turn his immovable neck, and waving his arm to right and left. "It's all mine!" Harlov's homestead lay on the top of a sloping hill. At the bottom, a few wretched-looking peasants' huts clustered close to a small pond. At the pond, on a washing platform, an old peasant woman in a check petticoat was beating some soaked linen with a bat.

"Axinia!" boomed Martin Petrovitch, but in such a note that the rooks flew up in a flock from an oat-field near . . . "Washing your husband's breeches?"

The peasant woman turned at once and bowed very low.

"Yes, sir," sounded her weak voice.

"Ay, ay! Yonder, look," Martin Petrovitch continued, proceeding at a trot alongside a half-rotting wattle fence, "that is my hemp-patch; and that yonder's the peasants'; see the difference? And this here is my garden; the apple-trees I planted, and the willows I planted too. Else there was no timber of any sort here. Look at that, and learn a lesson!"

We turned into the courtyard, shut in by a fence; right opposite the gate, rose an old tumbledown lodge, with a thatch roof, and steps up to it, raised on posts. On one side stood another, rather newer, and with a tiny attic; but it too was a ramshackly affair. "Here you may learn a lesson again," observed Harlov; "see what a little manor-house our fathers lived in; but now see what a mansion I have built myself." This "mansion" was like a house of cards. Five or six dogs, one more ragged and hideous than another, welcomed us with barking. "Sheep-dogs!" observed Martin Petrovitch. "Pure-bred Crimeans! Sh, damned brutes! I'll come and strangle you one after another!" On the steps of the new

building, there came out a young man, in a long full nankeen overall, the husband of Martin Petrovitch's elder daughter. Skipping quickly up to the droshky, he respectfully supported his father-in-law under the elbow as he got up, and even made as though he would hold the gigantic feet, which the latter, bending his bulky person forward, lifted with a sweeping movement across the seat; then he assisted me to dismount from my horse.

"Anna!" cried Harlov, "Natalia Nikolaevna's son has come to pay us a visit; you must find some good cheer for him. But where's Evlampia?" (Anna was the name of the elder daughter, Evlampia of the younger.)

"She's not at home; she's gone into the fields to get cornflowers," responded Anna, appearing at a little window near the door.

"Is there any junket?" queried Harlov.

"Yes."

"And cream too?"

"Yes."

"Well, set them on the table, and I'll show the young gentleman my own room meanwhile. This way, please, this way," he added, addressing me, and beckoning with his forefinger. In his own house he treated me less familiarly; as a host he felt obliged to be more formally respectful. He led me along a corridor. "Here is where I abide," he observed, stepping sideways over the threshold of a wide doorway, "this is my room. Pray walk in!"

His room turned out to be a big unplastered apartment, almost empty; on the walls, on nails driven in askew, hung two riding-whips, a three-cornered hat, reddish with wear, a single-barrelled gun, a sabre, a sort of curious horse-collar inlaid with metal plates, and the picture representing a burning candle blown on by the winds. In one corner stood a wooden settle covered with a parti-coloured rug. Hundreds of flies swarmed thickly about the ceiling; yet the room was cool. But there was a very strong smell of that peculiar odour of the forest which always accompanied Martin Petrovitch.

"Well, is it a nice room?" Harlov questioned me.

"Very nice."

"Look-ye, there hangs my Dutch horse-collar," Harlov went on, dropping into his familiar tone again. "A splendid horse-collar! got it by barter off a Jew. Just you look at it!"

"It's a good horse-collar."

"It's most practical. And just sniff it . . . what leather!" I smelt the horse-collar. It smelt of rancid oil and nothing else.

"Now, be seated, — there on the stool; make yourself at home," observed Harlov, while he himself sank on to the settle, and seemed to fall into a doze, shutting his eyes and even beginning to snore. I gazed at him with-

out speaking, with ever fresh wonder; he was a perfect mountain — there was no other word! Suddenly he started.

"Anna!" he shouted, while his huge stomach rose and fell like a wave on the sea; "what are you about? Look sharp! Didn't you hear me?"

"Everything's ready, father; come in," I heard his daughter's voice.

I inwardly marvelled at the rapidity with which Martin Petrovitch's behests had been carried out; and followed him into the drawing-room, where, on a table covered with a red cloth with white flowers on it, lunch was already prepared: junket, cream, wheaten bread, even powdered sugar and ginger. While I set to work on the junket, Martin Petrovitch growled affectionately, "Eat, my friend, eat, my dear boy; don't despise our country cheer," and sitting down again in a corner, again seemed to fall into a doze. Before me, perfectly motionless, with downcast eyes, stood Anna Martinovna, while I saw through the window her husband walking my cob up and down the yard, and rubbing the chain of the snaffle with his own hands.

VII

My mother did not like Harlov's elder daughter; she called her a stuck-up thing. Anna Martinovna scarcely ever came to pay us her respects, and behaved with chilly decorum in my mother's presence, though it was by her good offices she had been well educated at a boarding-school, and had been married, and on her wedding-day had received a thousand roubles and a yellow Turkish shawl, the latter, it is true, a trifle the worse for wear. She was a woman of medium height, thin, very brisk and rapid in her movements, with thick fair hair and a handsome dark face, on which the pale-blue narrow eyes showed up in a rather strange but pleasing way. She had a straight thin nose, her lips were thin too, and her chin was like the loop-end of a hair-pin. No one looking at her could fail to think: "Well, you are a clever creature — and a spiteful one, too!" And for all that, there was something attractive about her too. Even the dark moles, scattered "like buck-wheat" over her face, suited her and increased the feeling she inspired. Her hands thrust into her kerchief, she was slily watching me, looking downwards (I was seated, while she was standing). A wicked little smile strayed about her lips and her cheeks and in the shadow of her long eyelashes. "Ugh, you pampered little fine gentleman!" this smile seemed to express. Every time she drew a breath, her nostrils slightly distended — this, too, was rather strange. But all the same, it seemed to me that were Anna Martinovna to love me, or even to care to kiss me with her thin cruel lips, I should simply bound up to the ceiling with delight. I knew she was very severe and exacting, that the peasant women and girls went in terror of her — but what of that? Anna Martinovna secretly excited my imagination . . . though after all, I was only fifteen then, — and at that age! . . .

Martin Petrovitch roused himself again. "Anna!" he shouted, "you ought to strum something on the pianoforte . . . young gentlemen are fond of that."

I looked round; there was a pitiful semblance of a piano in the room.

"Yes, father," responded Anna Martinovna. "Only what am I to play the young gentleman? He won't find it interesting."

"Why, what did they teach you at your young ladies' seminary?"

"I've forgotten everything — besides, the notes are broken."

Anna Martinovna's voice was very pleasant, resonant and rather plaintive — like the note of some birds of prey.

"Very well," said Martin Petrovitch, and he lasped into dreaminess again. "Well," he began once more, "wouldn't you like, then, to see the threshing-floor, and have a look round? Volodka will escort you. — Hi, Volodka!" he shouted to his son-in-law, who was still pacing up and down the yard with my horse, "take the young gentleman to the threshing-floor . . . and show him my farming generally. But I must have a nap! So! good-bye!"

He went out and I after him. Anna Martinovna at once set to work rapidly, and, as it were, angrily, clearing the table. In the doorway, I turned and bowed to her. But she seemed not to notice my bow, and only smiled again, more maliciously than before.

I took my horse from Harlov's son-in-law and led him by the bridle. We went together to the threshing-floor, but as we discovered nothing very remarkable about it, and as he could not suppose any great interest in farming in a young lad like me, we returned through the garden to the main road.

VIII

I WAS well acquainted with Halov's son-in-law. His name was Vladimir Vassilievitch Sletkin. He was an orphan, brought up by my mother, and the son of a petty official, to whom she had intrusted some business. He had first been placed in the district school, then he had entered the "seignorial counting-house," then he had been put into the service of the government stores, and, finally, married to the daughter of Martin Petrovitch. My mother used to call him a little Jew, and certainly, with his curly hair, his black eyes always moist, like damson jam, his hook nose, and wide red mouth, he did suggest the Jewish type. But the colour of his skin was white and he was altogether very good-looking. He was of a most obliging temper, so long as his personal advantage was not involved. Then he promptly lost all self-control from greediness, and was moved even to tears. He was ready to whine the whole day long to gain the paltriest trifle; he would remind one a hundred times over of a promise, and be hurt and complain if it were not carried out at once. He liked sauntering

about the fields with a gun: and when he happened to get a hare or a wild duck, he would thrust his booty into his game-bag with peculiar zest, saying, "Now, you may be as tricky as you like, you won't escape me! Now you're *mine!*"

"You've a good horse," he began in his lisping voice, as he assisted me to get into the saddle: "I ought to have a horse like that! But where can I get one? I've no such luck. If you'd ask your mamma, now — remind her."

"Why, has she promised you one?"

"Promised? No: but I thought that in her great kindness ——"

"You should apply to Martin Petrovitch."

"To Martin Petrovitch?" Sletkin repeated, dwelling on each syllable. "To him I'm no better than a worthless page, like Maximka. He keeps a tight hand on us, that he does, and you get nothing from him for all your toil."

"Really?"

"Yes, by God. He'll say, 'My word's sacred!' — and there, it's as though he's chopped it off with an axe. You may beg or not, it's all one. Besides, Anna Martinovna, my wife, is not in such favour with him as Evlampia Martinovna. O merciful God, bless us and save us!" he suddenly interrupted himself, flinging up his hands in despair. "Look! what's that? A whole half-rood of oats, our oats, some wretch has gone and cut. The villain! Just see! Thieves! thieves! It's a true saying, to be sure, don't trust Eskovo, Beskovo, Erino, and Byelino! (these were the names of four villages near). Ah, ah, what a thing! A rouble and a half's worth, or, maybe, two roubles, loss!"

In Sletkin's voice, one could almost hear sobs. I gave my horse a poke in the ribs and rode away from him.

Sletkin's ejaculations still reached my hearing, when suddenly at a turn in the road, I came upon the second daughter of Harlov, Evlampia, who had, in the words of Anna Martinovna, gone into the fields to get corn-flowers. A thick wreath of those flowers was twined about her head. We exchanged bows in silence. Evlampia, too, was very good-looking; as much so as her sister, though in a different style. She was tall and stoutly built; everything about her was on a large scale: her head, and her feet and hands, and her snow-white teeth, and especially her eyes, prominent, languishing eyes, of the dark blue of glass beads. Everything about her, while still beautiful, had positively a monumental character (she was a true daughter of Martin Petrovitch). She did not, it seemed, know what to do with her massive fair mane, and she had twisted it in three plaits round her head. Her mouth was charming, crimson and fresh as a rose, and as she talked her upper lip was lifted in the middle in a very fascinating way. But there was something wild and almost fierce in the glance of her huge eyes. "A free bird, wild Cossack breed," so Martin

Petrovitch used to speak of her. I was in awe of her . . . This stately beauty reminded one of her father.

I rode on a little farther and heard her singing in a strong, even, rather harsh voice, a regular peasant voice; suddenly she ceased. I looked round and from the crest of the hill saw her standing beside Harlov's son-in-law, facing the rood of oats. The latter was gesticulating and pointing, but she stood without stirring. The sun lighted up her tall figure, and the wreath of cornflowers shone brilliantly blue on her head.

IX

I BELIEVE I have already mentioned that, for this second daughter of Harlov's too, my mother had already prepared a match. This was one of the poorest of our neighbours, a retired army major, Gavrila Fedulitch Zhitkov, a man no longer young, and, as he himself expressed it, not without a certain complacency, however, as though recommending himself, "battered and broken down." He could barely read and write, and was exceedingly stupid, but secretly aspired to become my mother's steward, as he felt himself to be a "man of action." "I can warm the peasants' hides for them, if I can do anything," he used to say, almost gnashing his own teeth, "because I was used to it," he used to explain, "in my former duties, I mean." Had Zhitkov been less of a fool, he would have realised that he had not the slightest chance of being steward to my mother, seeing that, for that, it would have been necessary to get rid of the present steward, one Kvitsinsky, a very capable Pole of great character, in whom my mother had the fullest confidence. Zhitkov had a long face, like a horse's; it was all overgrown with hair of a dusty whitish colour; his cheeks were covered with it right up to the eyes; and even in the severest frosts, it was sprinkled with an abundant sweat, like drops of dew. At the sight of my mother, he drew himself upright as a post, his head positively quivered with zeal, his huge hands slapped a little against his thighs, and his whole person seemed to express: "Command! . . . and I will strive my utmost!" My mother was under no illusion on the score of his abilities, which did not, however, hinder her from taking steps to marry him to Evlampia.

"Only, will you be able to manage her, my good sir?" she asked him one day.

Zhitkov smiled complacently.

"Upon my word, Natalia Nikolaevna! I used to keep a whole regiment in order; they were tame enough in my hands; and what's this? A trumpery business!'

"A regiment's one thing, sir, but a well-bred girl, a wife, is a very different matter," my mother observed with displeasure.

"Upon my word, ma'am! Natalia Nikolaevna!" Zhitkov cried again,

"that we're quite able to understand. In one word: a young lady, a delicate person!"

"Well!" my mother decided at length, "Evlampia won't let herself be trampled upon."

X

One day — it was the month of June, and evening was coming on — a servant announced the arrival of Martin Petrovitch. My mother was surprised: we had not seen him for over a week, but he had never visited us so late before. "Something has happened!" she exclaimed in an undertone. The face of Martin Petrovitch, when he rolled into the room and at once sank into a chair near the door, wore such an unusual expression, it was so preoccupied and positively pale, that my mother involuntarily repeated her exclamation aloud. Martin Petrovitch fixed his little eyes upon her, was silent for a space, sighed heavily, was silent again, and articulated at last that he had come about something . . . which . . . was of a kind, that on account of . . .

Muttering these disconnected words, he suddenly got up and went out.

My mother rang, ordered the footman, who appeared, to overtake Martin Petrovitch at once and bring him back without fail, but the latter had already had time to get into his droshky and drive away.

Next morning my mother, who was astonished and even alarmed, as much by Martin Petrovitch's strange behaviour as by the extraordinary expression of his face, was on the point of sending a special messenger to him, when he made his appearance. This time he seemed more composed.

"Tell me, my good friend, tell me," cried my mother, directly she saw him, "what ever has happened to you? I thought yesterday, upon my word I did . . . 'Mercy on us!' I thought, 'Hasn't our old friend gone right off his head?'"

"I've not gone off my head, madam," answered Martin Petrovitch; "I'm not that sort of man. But I want to consult with you."

"What about?"

"I'm only in doubt, whether it will be agreeable to you in this same contingency ——"

"Speak away, speak away, my good sir, but more simply. Don't alarm me! What's this same contingency? Speak more plainly. Or is it your melancholy come upon you again?"

Harlov scowled. "No, it's not melancholy — that comes upon me in the new moon; but allow me to ask you, madam, what do you think about death?"

My mother was taken aback. "About death?"

"About death. Can death spare any one whatever in this world?"

"What have you got in your head, my good friend? Who of us is immortal? For all you're born a giant, even to you there'll be an end in time."

"There will! oh, there will!" Harlov assented and he looked downcast. "I've had a vision come to me in my dreams," he brought out at last.

"What are you saying?" my mother interrupted him.

"A vision in my dreams," he repeated — "I'm a seer of visions, you know!"

"You!"

"I. Didn't you know it?" Harlov sighed. "Well, so. . . . Over a week ago, madam, I lay down, on the very last day of eating meat before St. Peter's fast-day; I lay down after dinner to rest a bit, well, and so I fell asleep, and dreamed a raven colt ran into the room to me. And this colt began sporting about and grinning. Black as a beetle was the raven colt." Harlov ceased.

"Well?" said my mother.

"And all of a sudden this same colt turns round, and gives me a kick in the left elbow, right in the funny bone. . . . I waked up; my arm would not move nor my leg either. Well, thinks I, it's paralysis; however, I worked them up and down, and got them to move again; only there were shooting pains in the joints a long time, and there are still. When I open my hand, the pains shoot through the joints."

"Why, Martin Petrovitch, you must have lain upon your arm somehow and crushed it."

"No, madam; pray, don't talk like that! It was an intimation . . . referring to my death, I mean."

"Well, upon my word," my mother was beginning.

"An intimation. Prepare thyself, man, as 'twere to say. And therefore, madam, here is what I have to announce to you, without a moment's delay. Not wishing," Harlov suddenly began shouting, "that the same death should come upon me, the servant of God, unawares, I have planned in my own mind this: to divide — now during my lifetime — my estate between my two daughters, Anna and Evlampia, according as God Almighty directs me —" Martin Petrovitch stopped, groaned, and added, "without a moment's delay."

"Well, that would be a good idea," observed my mother; "though I think you have no need to be in a hurry."

"And seeing that herein I desire," Harlov continued, raising his voice still higher, "to be observant of all due order and legality, so I humbly beg your young son, Dmitri Semyonovitch—I would not venture, madam, to trouble you — I beg the said Dmitri Semyonovitch, your son, and I claim of my kinsman, Bitchkov, as a plain duty, to assist at the ratification of the formal act and transference of possession to my two daughters — Anna, married, and Evlampia, spinster. Which act will be drawn up in readiness

the day after to-morrow at twelve o'clock, at my own place, Eskovo, also called Kozulkino, in the presence of the ruling authorities and functionaries, who are thereto invited."

Martin Petrovitch with difficulty reached the end of this speech, which he had obviously learnt by heart, and which was interspersed with frequent sighs. . . . He seemed to have no breath left in his chest; his pale face was crimson again, and he several times wiped the sweat off it.

"So you've already composed the deed dividing your property?" my mother queried. "When did you manage that?"

"I managed it . . . oh! Neither eating, nor drinking ——"

"Did you write it yourself?"

"Volodka . . . oh! helped."

"And have you forwarded a petition?"

"I have, and the chamber has sanctioned it, and notice has been given to the district court, and the temporary division of the local court has . . . oh! . . . been notified to be present."

My mother laughed. "I see, Martin Petrovitch, you've made every arrangement already — and how quickly. You've not spared money, I should say?"

"No, indeed, madam."

"Well, well. And you say you want to consult with me. Well, my little Dmitri can go; and I'll send Souvenir with him, and speak to Kvitsinsky. . . . But you haven't invited Gavrila Fedulitch?"

"Gavrila Fedulitch — Mr. Zhitkov — has had notice . . . from me also. As a betrothed, it was only fitting."

Martin Petrovitch had obviously exhausted all the resources of his eloquence. Besides, it always seemed to me that he did not look altogether favourably on the match my mother had made for his daughter; possibly, he had expected a more advantageous marriage for his darling Evlampia.

He got up from his chair, and made a scrape with his foot. "Thank you for your consent."

"Where are you off to?" asked my mother. "Stay a bit; I'll order some lunch to be served you."

"Much obliged," responded Harlov. "But I cannot. . . . Oh! I must get home."

He backed and was about to move sideways, as his habit was, through the door.

"Stop, stop a minute," my mother went on, "can you possibly mean to make over the whole of your property without reserve to your daughters?"

"Certainly, without reserve."

"Well, but how about yourself — where are you going to live?"

Harlov positively flung up his hands in amazement. "You ask where? In my house, at home, as I've lived hitherto . . . so henceforward. Whatever difference could there be?"

"You have such confidence in your daughters and your son-in-law, then?"

"Were you pleased to speak of Volodka? A poor stick like him? Why, I can do as I like with him, whatever it is . . . what authority has he? As for them, my daughters, that is, to care for me till I'm in the grave, to give me meat and drink, and clothe me. . . . Merciful heavens! it's their first duty. I shall not long be an eyesore to them. Death's not over the hills — it's upon my shoulders."

"Death is in God's hands," observed my mother; "though that is their duty, to be sure. Only pardon me, Martin Petrovitch; your elder girl, Anna, is well known to be proud and imperious, and — well — the second has a fierce look. . . ."

"Natalia Nikolaevna!" Harlov broke in, "why do you say that? . . . Why, as though they . . . My daughters . . . Why, as though I . . . Forget their duty? Never in their wildest dreams . . . Offer opposition? To whom? Their parent . . . Dare to do such a thing? Have they not my curse to fear? They've passed their life long in fear and in submission — and all of a sudden . . . Good Lord!"

Harlov choked, there was a rattle in his throat.

"Very well, very well," my mother made haste to soothe him; "only I don't understand all the same what has put it into your head to divide the property up now. It would have come to them afterwards, in any case. I imagine it's your melancholy that's at the bottom of it all."

"Eh, ma'am," Harlov rejoined, not without vexation, "you will keep coming back to that. There is, maybe, a higher power at work in this, and you talk of melancholy. I thought to do this, madam, because in my own person, while still in life, I wish to decide in my presence, who is to possess what, and with what I will reward each, so that they may possess, and feel thankfulness, and carry out my wishes, and what their father and benefactor has resolved upon, they may accept as a bountiful gift."

Harlov's voice broke again.

"Come, that's enough, that's enough, my good friend," my mother cut him short; "or your raven colt will be putting in an appearance in earnest."

"O Natalia Nikolaevna, don't talk to me of it," groaned Harlov. "That's my death come after me. Forgive my intrusion. And you, my little sir, I shall have the honour of expecting you the day after to-morrow."

Martin Petrovitch went out; my mother looked after him, and shook her head significantly. "This is a bad business," she murmured, "a bad business. You noticed" — she addressed herself to me — "he talked, and all the while seemed blinking, as though the sun were in his eyes; that's a bad sign. When a man's like that, his heart's sure to be heavy, and misfortune threatens him. You must go over the day after to-morrow with Vikenty Osipovitch and Souvenir."

XI

On the day appointed, our big family coach, with seats for four, harnessed with six bay horses, and with the head coachman, the grey-bearded and portly Alexeitch, on the box, rolled smoothly up to the steps of our house. The importance of the act upon which Harlov was about to enter, and the solemnity with which he had invited us, had had their effect on my mother. She had herself given orders for this extraordinary state equipage to be brought out, and had directed Souvenir and me to put on our best clothes. She obviously wished to show respect to her protégé. As for Kvitsinsky, he always wore a frockcoat and white tie. Souvenir chattered like a magpie all the way, giggled, wondered whether his brother would apportion him anything, and thereupon called him a dummy and an old fogey. Kvitsinsky, a man of severe and bilious temperament, could not put up with it at last. "What can induce you," he observed, in his distinct Polish accent, "to keep up such a continual unseemly chatter? Can you really be incapable of sitting quiet without these 'wholly superfluous' (his favourite phrase) inanities?" "All right, d'rectly," Souvenir muttered discontentedly, and he fixed his squinting eyes on the carriage window. A quarter of an hour had not passed, the smoothly trotting horses had scarcely begun to get warm under the straps of their new harness, when Harlov's homestead came into sight. Through the widely open gate, our coach rolled into the yard. The diminutive postillion, whose legs hardly reached halfway down his horse's body, for the last time leaped up with a babyish shriek into the soft saddle, old Alexeitch at once spread out and raised his elbows, a slight "wo-o" was heard, and we stopped. The dogs did not bark to greet us, and the serf boys, in long smocks that gaped open over their big stomachs, had all hidden themselves. Harlov's son-in-law was awaiting us in the doorway. I remember I was particularly struck by the birch boughs stuck in on both sides of the steps, as though it were Trinity Sunday. "Grandeur upon grandeur," Souvenir, who was the first to alight, squeaked through his nose. And certainly there was a solemn air about everything. Harlov's son-in-law was wearing a plush cravat with a satin bow, and an extraordinarily tight tail-coat; while Maximka, who popped out behind his back, had his hair so saturated with kvas, that it positively dripped. We went into the parlour, and saw Martin Petrovitch towering — yes, positively towering — motionless, in the middle of the room. I don't know what Souvenir's and Kvitsinsky's feelings were at the sight of his colossal figure; but I felt something akin to awe. Martin Petrovitch was attired in a grey Cossack coat — his militia uniform of 1812 it must have been — with a black stand-up collar. A bronze medal was to be seen on his breast, a sabre hung at his side; he laid his left hand on the hilt, with his right he was leaning on the table, which was covered with a red cloth. Two sheets of paper, full of writing, lay

on the table. Harlov stood motionless, not even gasping; and what dignity was expressed in his attitude, what confidence in himself, in his unlimited and unquestionable power! He barely greeted us with a motion of the head, and barely articulating "Be seated!" pointed the forefinger of his left hand in the direction of some chairs set in a row. Against the right-hand wall of the parlour were standing Harlov's daughters wearing their Sunday clothes: Anna, in a shot lilac-green dress, with a yellow silk sash; Evlampia, in pink, with crimson ribbons. Near them stood Zhitkov, in a new uniform, with the habitual expression of dull and greedy expectation in his eyes, and with a greater profusion of sweat than usual over his hirsute countenance. On the left side of the room sat the priest, in a threadbare snuff-coloured cassock, an old man, with rough brown hair. This head of hair, and the dejected lack-lustre eyes, and the big wrinkled hands, which seemed a burden even to himself, and lay like two rocks on his knees, and the tarred boots which peeped out beneath his cassock, all seemed to tell of a joyless laborious life. His parish was a very poor one. Beside him was the local police captain, a fattish, palish, dirty-looking little gentleman, with soft puffy little hands and feet, black eyes, black short-clipped moustaches, a continual cheerful but yet sickly little smile on his face. He had the reputation of being a great taker of bribes, and even a tyrant, as the expression was in those days. But not only the gentry, even the peasants were used to him, and liked him. He bent very free and easy and rather ironical looks around him; it was clear that all this "procedure" amused him. In reality, the only part that had any interest for him was the light lunch and spirits in store for us. But the attorney sitting near him, a lean man with a long face, narrow whiskers from his ears to his nose, as they were worn in the days of Alexander the First, was absorbed with his whole soul in Martin Petrovitch's proceedings, and never took his big serious eyes off him. In his concentrated attention and sympathy, he kept moving and twisting his lips, though without opening his mouth. Souvenir stationed himself next him, and began talking to him in a whisper, after first informing me that he was the chief freemason in the province. The temporary division of the local court consists, as every one knows, of the police captain, the attorney, and the rural police commissioner; but the latter was either absent or kept himself in the background, so that I did not notice him. He bore, however, the nickname "the non-existent" among us in the district, just as there are tramps called "the non-identified." I sat next Souvenir, Kvitsinsky next me. The face of the practical Pole showed unmistakable annoyance at our "wholly superfluous" expedition, and unnecessary waste of time. . . . "A grand lady's caprices! these Russian grandees' fancies!" he seemed to be murmuring to himself. . . . "Ugh, these Russians!"

XII

When we were all seated, Martin Petrovitch hunched his shoulders, cleared his throat, scanned us all with his bear-like little eyes, and with a noisy sigh began as follows:

"Gentlemen, I have called you together for the following purpose. I am grown old, gentlemen, and overcome by infirmities. . . . Already I have had an intimation, the hour of death steals on, like a thief in the night. . . . Isn't that so, father?" he addressed the priest.

The priest started. "Quite so, quite so," he mumbled, his beard shaking.

"And therefore," continued Martin Petrovitch, suddenly raising his voice, "not wishing the said death to come upon me unawares, I purposed" . . . Martin Petrovitch proceeded to repeat, word for word, the speech he had made to my mother two days before. "In accordance with this my determination," he shouted louder than ever, "this deed" (he struck his hand on the papers lying on the table) "has been drawn up by me, and the presiding authorites have been invited by me, and wherein my will consists the following points will treat. I have ruled, my day is over!"

Martin Petrovitch put his round iron spectacles on his nose, took one of the written sheets from the table, and began:

"Deed of partition of the estate of the retired non-commissioned officer and nobleman, Martin Harlov, drawn up by himself in his full and right understanding, and by his own good judgment, and wherein is precisely defined what benefits are assigned to his two daughters, Anna and Evlampia — bow!" — (they bowed), "and in what way the serfs and other property, and live stock, be apportioned between the said daughters! Under my hand!"

"This is their document!" the police captain whispered to Kvitsinsky, with his invariable smile, "they want to read it for the beauty of the style, but the legal deed is made out formally, without all these flourishes."

Souvenir was beginning to snigger. . . .

"In accordance with my will," put in Harlov, who had caught the police captain's remark.

"In accordance in every point," the latter hastened to respond cheerfully; "only, as you're aware, Martin Petrovitch, there's no dispensing with formality. And unnecessary details have been removed. For the chamber can't enter into the question of spotted cows and fancy drakes."

"Come here!" boomed Harlov to his son-in-law, who had come into the room behind us, and remained standing with an obsequious air near the door. He skipped up to his father-in-law at once.

"There, take it and read! It's hard for me. Only mind and don't mumble it! Let all the gentlemen present be able to understand it."

Sletkin took the paper in both hands, and began timidly, but distinctly, and with taste and feeling, to read the deed of partition. There was set

forth in it with the greatest accuracy just what was assigned to Anna and what to Evlampia, and how the division was to be made. Harlov from time to time interspersed the reading with phrases. "Do you hear, that's for you, Anna, for your zeal!" or, "That I give you, Evlampia!" and both the sisters bowed, Anna from the waist, Evlampia simply with a motion of the head. Harlov looked at them with stern dignity. "The farm house" (the little new building) was assigned by him to Evlampia, as the younger daughter, "by the well-known custom." The reader's voice quivered and resounded at these words, unfavourable for himself; while Zhitkov licked his lips. Evlampia gave him a sidelong glance; had I been in Zhitkov's shoes, I should not have liked that glance. The scornful expression, characteristic of Evlampia, as of every genuine Russian beauty, had a peculiar shade at that moment. For himself, Martin Petrovitch reserved the right to go on living in the rooms he occupied, and assigned to himself, under the name of "rations," a full allowance "of normal provisions," and ten roubles a month for clothes. The last phrase of the deed Harlov wished to read himself. "And this my parental will," it ran, "to carry out and observe is a sacred and binding duty on my daughters, seeing it is a command; seeing that I am, after God, their father and head, and am not bounden to render an account to any, nor have so rendered. And do they carry out my will, so will my fatherly blessing be with them, but should they not so do, which God forbid, then will they be overtaken by my paternal curse that cannot be averted, now and for ever, amen!" Harlov raised the deed high above his head Anna at once dropped on her knees and touched the ground with her forehead; her husband, too, doubled up after her. "Well, and you?" Harlov turned to Evlampia. She crimsoned all over, and she too bowed to the earth; Zhitkov bent his whole carcase forward.

"Sign!" cried Harlov, pointing his forefinger to the bottom of the deed. "Here: 'I thank and accept, Anna. I thank and accept, Evlampia!'"

Both daughters rose, and signed one after another. Sletkin rose too, and was feeling after the pen, but Harlov moved him aside, sticking his middle finger into his cravat, so that he gasped. The silence lasted a moment. Suddenly Martin Petrovitch gave a sort of sob, and muttering, "Well, now it's all yours!" moved away. His daughters and son-in-law looked at one another, went up to him and began kissing him just above his elbow. His shoulder they could not reach.

XIII

THE police captain read the real formal document, the deed of gift, drawn up by Martin Petrovitch. Then he went out on to the steps with the attorney and explained what had taken place to the crowd assembled at the gates, consisting of the witnesses required by law and other people from the

neighbourhood, Harlov's peasants, and a few house-serfs. Then began the ceremony of the new owners entering into possession. They came out, too, upon the steps, and the police captain pointed to them when, slightly scowling with one eyebrow, while his careless face assumed for an instant a threatening air, he exhorted the crowd to "subordination." He might well have dispensed with these exhortations: a less unruly set of countenances than those of the Harlov peasants, I imagine, have never existed in creation. Clothed in thin smocks and torn sheepskins, but very tightly girt round their waists, as is always the peasants' way on solemn occasions, they stood motionless as though cut out of stone, and whenever the police captain uttered any exclamation such as, "D'ye hear, you brutes? d'ye understand, you devils?" they suddenly bowed all at once, as though at the word of command. Each of these "brutes and devils" held his cap tight in both hands, and never took his eyes off the window, where Martin Petrovitch's figure was visible. The witnesses themselves were hardly less awed. "Is any impediment known to you," the police captain roared at them, "against the entrance into possession of these the sole and legitimate heirs and daughters of Martin Petrovitch Harlov?"

All the witnesses seemed to huddle together at once.

"Do you know any, you devils?" the police captain shouted again.

"We know nothing, your excellency," responded sturdily a little old man, marked with small-pox, with a clipped beard and whiskers, an old soldier.

"I say! Eremeitch's a bold fellow!" the witnesses said of him as they dispersed.

In spite of the police captain's entreaties, Harlov would not come out with his daughters on to the steps. "My subjects will obey my will without that!" he answered. Something like sadness had come over him on the completion of the conveyance. His face had grown pale. This new unprecedented expression of sadness looked so out of place on Martin Petrovitch's broad and kindly features that I positively was at a loss what to think. Was an attack of melancholy coming over him? The peasants, on their side, too, were obviously puzzled. And no wonder! "The master's alive, — there he stands, and such a master, too; Martin Petrovitch! And all of a sudden he won't be their owner. . . . A queer thing!" I don't know whether Harlov had an inkling of the notions that were straying through his "subjects'" heads, or whether he wanted to display his power for the last time, but he suddenly opened the little window, stuck his head out, and shouted in a voice of thunder, "obedience!" Then he slammed-to the window. The peasants' bewilderment was certainly not dispelled nor decreased by this proceeding. They became stonier than ever, and even seemed to cease looking at anything. The group of house-serfs (among them were two sturdy wenches, in short chintz gowns, with muscles such as one might perhaps match in Michael Angelo's "Last Judg-

ment," and one utterly decrepit old man, hoary with age and half blind, in a threadbare frieze cloak, rumoured to have been "cornet-player" in the days of Potemkin, — the page Maximka, Harlov had reserved for himself) this group showed more life than the peasants; at least, it moved restlessly about. The new mistresses themselves were very dignified in their attitude, especially Anna. Her thin lips tightly compressed, she looked obstinately down . . . her stern figure augured little good to the house-serfs. Evlampia, too, did not raise her eyes; only once she turned round and deliberately, as it were with surprise, scanned her betrothed, Zhitkov, who had thought fit, following Sletkin, to come out, too, on to the steps. "What business have you here?" those handsome prominent eyes seemed to demand. Sletkin was the most changed of all. A bustling cheeriness showed itself in his whole bearing, as though he were overtaken by hunger; the movements of his head and his legs were as obsequious as ever, but how gleefully he kept working his arms, how fussily he twitched his shoulder-blades. "Arrived at last!" he seemed to say. Having finished the ceremony of the entrance into possession, the police captain, whose mouth was literally watering at the prospect of lunch, rubbed his hands in that peculiar manner which usually precedes the tossing-off of the first glass of spirits. But it appeared that Martin Petrovitch wished first to have a service performed with sprinklings of holy water. The priest put on an ancient and decrepit chasuble; a decrepit deacon came out of the kitchen, with difficulty kindling the incense in an old brazen church-vessel. The service began. Harlov sighed continually; he was unable, owing to his corpulence, to bow to the ground, but crossing himself with his right hand and bending his head, he pointed with the forefinger of his left hand to the floor. Sletkin positively beamed and even shed tears. Zhitkov, with dignity, in martial fashion, flourished his fingers only slightly between the third and fourth button of his uniform. Kvitsinsky, as a Catholic, remained in the next room. But the attorney prayed so fervently, sighed so sympathetically after Martin Petrovitch, and so persistently muttered and chewed his lips, turning his eyes upwards, that I felt moved, as I looked at him, and began to pray fervently too. At the conclusion of the service and the sprinkling with holy water, during which every one present, even the blind cornet-player, the contemporary of Potemkin, even Kvitsinsky, moistened their eyes with holy water, Anna and Evlampia once more, at Martin Petrovitch's bidding, prostrated themselves to the ground to thank him. Then at last came the moment of lunch. There were a great many dishes and all very nice; we all ate terribly much. The inevitable bottle of Don wine made its appearance. The police captain, who was of all of us the most familiar with the usages of the world, and besides, the representative of government, was the first to propose the toast to the health "of the fair proprietresses!" Then he proposed we should drink to the health of our most honoured and most generous-hearted friend, Martin Petrovitch. At

the words "most generous-hearted," Sletkin uttered a shrill little cry and ran to kiss his benefactor. . . . "There, that'll do, that'll do," muttered Harlov, as it were with annoyance, keeping him off with his elbow . . . But at this point a not quite pleasant, as they say, incident took place.

XIV

Souvenir, who had been drinking continuously ever since the beginning of luncheon, suddenly got up from his chair as red as a beetroot, and pointing his finger at Martin Petrovitch, went off into his mawkish, paltry laugh.

"Generous-hearted! Generous-hearted!" he began croaking; "but we shall see whether this generosity will be much to his taste when he's stripped naked, the servant of God . . . and out in the snow, too!"

"What rot are you talking, fool?" said Harlov contemptuously.

"Fool! fool!" repeated Souvenir. "God Almighty alone knows which of us is the real fool. But you, brother, did my sister, your wife, to her death, and now you've done for yourself . . . ha-ha-ha!"

"How dare you insult our honoured benefactor?" Sletkin began shrilly, and, tearing himself away from Martin Petrovitch, whose shoulder he had clutched, he flew at Souvenir. "But let me tell you, if our benefactor desires it, we can cancel the deed this very minute!"

"And yet, you'll strip him naked, and turn him out into the snow . . ." returned Souvenir, retreating behind Kvitsinsky.

"Silence!" thundered Harlov. "I'll pound you into a jelly! And you hold your tongue too, puppy!" he turned to Sletkin; "don't put in your word where you're not wanted! If I, Martin Petrovitch Harlov, have decided to make a deed of partition, who can cancel the same act against my will? Why, in the whole world there is no power." . . .

"Martin Petrovitch!" the attorney began in a mellow bass — he too had drunk a good deal, but his dignity was only increased thereby — "but how if the gentleman has spoken the truth? You have done a generous action, to be sure; but how if — God forbid — in reality in place of fitting gratitude, some affront come of it?"

I stole a glance at both Martin Petrovitch's daughters. Anna's eyes were simply pinned upon the speaker, and a face more spiteful, more snake-like, and more beautiful in its very spite I had certainly never seen! Evlampia sat turned away, with her arms folded. A smile more scornful than ever curved her full, rosy lips.

Harlov got up from his chair, opened his mouth, but apparently his tongue failed him. . . . He suddenly brought his fist down on the table, so that everything in the room danced and rang.

"Father," Anna said hurriedly, "they do not know us, and that is why they judge of us so. But don't, please, make yourself ill. You are angered for nothing, indeed; see, your face is, as it were, twisted awry."

Harlov looked towards Evlampia; she did not stir, though Zhitkov, sitting beside her, gave her a poke in the side.

"Thank you, my daughter Anna," said Harlov huskily; "you are a sensible girl; I rely upon you and on your husband too." Sletkin once more gave vent to a shrill little sound; Zhitkov expanded his chest and gave a little scrape with his foot; but Harlov did not observe his efforts. "This dolt," he went on, with a motion of his chin in the direction of Souvenir, "is pleased to get a chance to teaze me; but you, my dear sir," he addressed himself to the attorney, "it is not for you to pass judgment on Martin Harlov; that is something beyond you. Though you are a man in official position, your words are most foolish. Besides, the deed is done, there will be no going back from my determination. . . . Now, I will wish you good-day, I am going away. I am no longer the master of this house, but a guest in it. Anna, do you do your best; but I will go to my own room. Enough!"

Martin Petrovitch turned his back on us, and, without adding another word, walked deliberately out of the room.

This sudden withdrawal on the part of our host could not but break up the party, especially as the two hostesses also vanished not long after. Sletkin vainly tried to keep us. The police captain did not fail to blame the attorney for his uncalled-for candour. "Couldn't help it!" the latter responded. . . . "My conscience spoke."

"There, you see that he's a mason," Souvenir whispered to me.

"Conscience!" retorted the police captain. "We know all about your conscience! I suppose it's in your pocket, just the same as it is with us sinners!"

The priest, meanwhile, even though already on his feet, foreseeing the speedy termination of the repast, lifted mouthful after mouthful to his mouth without a pause.

"You've got a fine appetite, I see," Sletkin observed to him sharply.

"Storing up for the future," the priest responded with a meek grimace; years of hunger were expressed in that reply.

The carriages rattled up . . . and we separated. On the way home, no one hindered Souvenir's chatter and silly tricks, as Kvitsinsky had announced that he was sick of all this "wholly superfluous" unpleasantness, and had set off home before us on foot. In his place, Zhitkov took a seat in our coach. The retired major wore a most dissatisfied expression, and kept twitching his moustaches like a spider.

"Well, your noble Excellency," lisped Souvenir, "is subordination exploded, eh? Wait a bit and see what will happen! They'll give you the sack too. Ah, a poor bridegroom you are, a poor bridegroom, an unlucky bridegroom!"

Souvenir was positively beside himself; while poor Zhitkov could do nothing but twitch his moustaches.

When I got home I told my mother all I had seen. She heard me to the end, and shook her head several times. "It's a bad business," was her comment. "I don't like all these innovations!"

XV

NEXT day Martin Petrovitch came to dinner. My mother congratulated him on the successful conclusion of his project. "You are now a free man," she said, "and ought to feel more at ease."

"More at ease, to be sure, madam," answered Martin Petrovitch, by no means, however, showing in the expression of his face that he really was more at ease. "Now I can meditate upon my soul, and make ready for my last hour, as I ought."

"Well," queried my mother, "and do the shooting pains still tingle in your arms?"

Harlov twice clenched and unclenched his left arm. "They do, madam; and I've something else to tell you. As I begin to drop asleep, some one cries in my head, 'Take care! Take care!'"

"That's nerves," observed my mother, and she began speaking of the previous day, and referred to certain circumstances which had attended the completion of the deed of partition. . . .

"To be sure, to be sure," Harlov interrupted her, "there was something of the sort . . . of no consequence. Only there's something I would tell you," he added, hesitating — "I was not disturbed yesterday by Souvenir's silly words — even Mr. Attorney, though he's no fool — even he did not trouble me; no, it was quite another person disturbed me ——" Here Harlov faltered.

"Who?" asked my mother.

Harlov fastened his eyes upon her: "Evlampia!"

"Evlampia? Your daughter? How was that?"

"Upon my word, madam, she was like a stone! nothing but a statue! Can it be she has no feeling? Her sister, Anna — well, she was all she should be. She's a keen-witted creature! But Evlampia — why, I'd shown her — I must own — so much partiality! Can it be she's no feeling for me! It's clear I'm in a bad way; it's clear I've a feeling that I'm not long for this world, since I make over everything to them; and yet she's like a stone! she might at least utter a sound! Bows — yes, she bows, but there's no thankfulness to be seen."

"There, give over," observed my mother, "we'll marry her to Gavrila Fedulitch . . . she'll soon get softer in his hands."

Martin Petrovitch once more looked from under his brows at my mother. "Well, there's Gavrila Fedulitch, to be sure! You have confidence in him, then, madam?"

"I've confidence in him."

"Very well; you should know best, to be sure. But Evlampia, let me tell you, is like me. The character is just the same. She has the wild Cossack blood, and her heart's like a burning coal!"

"Why, do you mean to tell me you've a heart like that, my dear sir?"

Harlov made no answer. A brief silence followed.

"What are you going to do, Martin Petrovitch," my mother began, "in what way do you mean to set about saving your soul now? Will you set off to Mitrophan or to Kiev, or maybe you'll go to the Optin desert, as it's in the neighbourhood? There, they do say, there's a holy monk appeared . . . Father Makary they call him, no one remembers any one like him! He sees right through all sins."

"If she really turns out an ungrateful daughter," Harlov enunciated in a husky voice, "then it would be better for me, I believe, to kill her with my own hands!"

"What are you saying! Lord, have mercy on you!" cried my mother. "Think what you're saying! There, see, what a pretty pass it's come to. You should have listened to me the other day when you came to consult me! Now, here, you'll go tormenting yourself, instead of thinking of your soul! You'll be tormenting yourself, and all to no purpose! Yes! Here you're complaining now, and faint-hearted . . ."

This reproach seemed to stab Harlov to the heart. All his old pride came back to him with a rush. He shook himself, and thrust out his chin. "I am not a man, madam, Natalia Nikolaevna, to complain or be faint-hearted," he began sullenly. "I simply wished to reveal my feelings to you as my benefactress and a person I respect. But the Lord God knows (here he raised his hand high above his head) that this globe of earth may crumble to pieces before I will go back from my word, or . . . (here he positively snorted) show a faint heart, or regret what I have done! I had good reasons, be sure! My daughters will never forget their duty, for ever and ever, amen!"

My mother stopped her ears. "What's this for, my good sir, like a trumpet-blast! If you really have such faith in your family, well, praise the Lord for it! You've quite put my brains in a whirl!"

Martin Petrovitch begged pardon, sighed twice, and was silent. My mother once more referred to Kiev, the Optin desert, and Father Makary. . . . Harlov assented, said that "he must . . . he must . . . he would have to . . . his soul" . . . and that was all. He did not regain his cheerfulness before he went away. From time to time he clenched and unclenched his fist, looked at his open hand, said that what he feared above everything was dying without repentence, from a stroke, and that he had made a vow to himself not to get angry, as anger vitiated his blood and drove it to his head. . . . Besides, he had now withdrawn from everything. What grounds could he have for getting angry? Let other people trouble themselves now and vitiate their blood!

As he took leave of my mother he looked at her in a strange way, mournfully and questioningly . . . and suddenly, with a rapid movement, drew out of his pocket the volume of *The Worker's Leisure-Hour*, and thrust it into my mother's hand.

"What's that?" she inquired.

"Read . . . here," he said hurriedly, "where the corner's turned down, about death. It seems to me, it's terribly well said, but I can't make it out at all. Can't you explain it to me, my benefactress? I'll come back again and you explain it me."

With these words Martin Petrovitch went away.

"He's in a bad way, he's in a bad way," observed my mother, directly he had disappeared through the doorway, and she set to work upon the *Leisure-Hour*. On the page turned down by Harlov were the following words:

"Death is a grand and solemn work of nature. It is nothing else than that the spirit, inasmuch as it is lighter, finer, and infinitely more penetrating than those elements under whose sway it has been subject, nay, even than the force of electricity itself, so is chemically purified and striveth upward till what time it attaineth an equally spiritual abiding-place for itself . . ." and so on.

My mother read this passage through twice, and exclaiming, "Pooh!" she flung the book away.

Three days later, she received the news that her sister's husband was dead, and set off to her sister's country-seat, taking me with her. My mother proposed to spend a month with her, but she stayed on till late in the autumn, and it was only at the end of September that we returned to our own estate.

XVI

The first news with which my valet, Prokofy, greeted me (he regarded himself as the seignorial huntsman) was that there was an immense number of wild snipe on the wing, and that in the birch-copse near Eskovo (Harlov's property), especially, they were simply swarming. I had three hours before me till dinner-time. I promptly seized my gun and my game-bag, and with Prokofy and a setter-dog, hastened to the Eskovo copse. We certainly did find a great many wild snipe there, and, firing about thirty charges, killed five. As I hurried homewards with my booty, I saw a peasant ploughing near the road-side. His horse had stopped, and with tearful and angry abuse he was mercilessly tugging with the cord reins at the animal's head, which was bent on one side. I looked attentively at the luckless beast, whose ribs were all but through its skin, and, bathed in sweat, heaved up and down with convulsive, irregular movements like a blacksmith's bellows. I recognised it at once as the decrepit old mare,

with the scar on her shoulder, who had served Martin Petrovitch so many years.

"Is Mr. Harlov living?" I asked Prokofy. The chase had so completely absorbed us, that up to that instant we had not talked of anything.

"Yes, he's alive. Why?"

"But that's his mare, isn't it? Do you mean to say he's sold her?"

"His mare it is, to be sure; but as to selling, he never sold her. But they took her away from him, and handed her over to that peasant."

"How, took it? And he consented?"

"They never asked his consent. Things have changed here in your absence," Prokofy observed, with a faint smile in response to my look of amazement; "worse luck! My goodness, yes! Now Sletkin's master, and orders every one about."

"But Martin Petrovitch?"

"Why, Martin Petrovitch has become the very last person here, you may say. He's on bread and water, — what more can one say? They've crushed him altogether. Mark my words; they'll drive him out of the house."

The idea that it was possible to *drive* such a giant had never entered my head. "And what does Zhitkov say to it?" I asked at last. "I suppose he's married to the second daughter?"

"Married?" repeated Prokofy, and this time he grinned all over his face. "They won't let him into the house. 'We don't want you,' they say; 'get along home with you.' It's as I said; Sletkin directs every one."

"But what does the young lady say?"

"Evlampia Martinovna? Ah, master, I could tell you . . . but you're young — one must think of that. Things are going on here that are . . . oh! . . . oh! . . . oh! Hey! why Dianka's setting, I do believe!"

My dog actually had stopped short, before a thick oak bush which bordered a narrow ravine by the roadside. Prokofy and I ran up to the dog; a snipe flew up out of the bush, we both fired at it and missed: the snipe settled in another place; we followed it.

The soup was already on the table when I got back. My mother scolded me. "What's the meaning of it?" she said with displeasure: "the very first day, and you keep us waiting for dinner." I brought her the wild snipe I had killed; she did not even look at them. There were also in the room Souvenir, Kvitsinsky, and Zhitkov. The retired major was huddled in a corner, for all the world like a schoolboy in disgrace. His face wore an expression of mingled confusion and annoyance; his eyes were red . . . One might positively have imagined he had recently been in tears. My mother remained in an ill humour. I was at no great pains to surmise that my late arrival did not count for much in it. During dinner-time she hardly talked at all. The major turned beseeching glances upon her from time to time, but ate a good dinner nevertheless. Souvenir was all of a shake. Kvitsinsky preserved his habitual self-confidence of demeanour.

"Vikenty Osipitch," my mother addressed him, "I beg you to send a carriage to-morrow for Martin Petrovitch, since it has come to my knowledge that he has none of his own. And bid them tell him to come without fail, that I desire to see him."

Kvitsinsky was about to make some rejoinder, but he restrained himself.

"And let Sletkin know," continued my mother, "that I command him to present himself before me . . . Do you hear? I com . . . mand!"

"Yes, just so . . . that scoundrel ought —— " Zhitkov was beginning in a subdued voice; but my mother gave him such a contemptuous look, that he promptly turned away and was silent.

"Do you hear? I command!" repeated my mother.

"Certainly, madam," Kvitsinsky replied submissively but with dignity.

"Martin Petrovitch won't come!" Souvenir whispered to me, as he came out of the dining-room with me after dinner. "You should just see what's happened to him! It's past comprehension! It's come to this, that whatever they say to him, he doesn't understand a word! Yes! They've got the snake under the pitchfork!"

And Souvenir went off into his revolting laugh.

XVII

Souvenir's prediction turned out correct. Martin Petrovitch would not come to my mother. She was not at all pleased with this, and despatched a letter to him. He sent her a square bit of paper, on which the following words were written in big letters: "Indeed I can't. I should die of shame. Let me go to my ruin. Thanks. Don't torture me. — Martin Harlov." Sletkin did come, but not on the day on which my mother had "commanded" his attendance, but twenty-four hours later. My mother gave orders that he should be shown into her boudoir. . . . God knows what their interview was about, but it did not last long; a quarter of an hour, not more. Sletkin came out of my mother's room, crimson all over, and with such a viciously spiteful and insolent expression of face, that, meeting him in the drawing-room, I was simply petrified, while Souvenir, who was hanging about there, stopped short in the middle of a snigger. My mother came out of her boudoir, also very red in the face, and announced, in the hearing of all, that Mr. Sletkin was never, upon any pretext, to be admitted to her presence again, and that if Martin Petrovitch's daughters were to make bold — they've impudence enough, said she — to present themselves, they, too, were to be refused admittance. At dinner-time she suddenly exclaimed "The vile little Jew! I picked him out of the gutter, I made him a career, he owes everything, everything to me, — and he dares to tell me I've no business to meddle in their affairs! that Martin Petrovitch is full of whims and fancies, and it's impossible to humor him! Humour him, indeed! What a thing to say! Ah, he's an ungrateful wretch! An insolent little Jew!"

Major Zhitkov, who happened to be one of the company at dinner, imagined that now it was no less than the will of the Almighty for him to seize the opportunity and put in his word . . . but my mother promptly settled him. "Well, and you're a fine one, too, my man!" she commented. "Couldn't get the upper hand of a girl, and he an officer! In command of a squadron! I can fancy how it obeyed you! He take a steward's place indeed! a fine steward he'd make!"

Kvitsinsky, who was sitting at the end of the table, smiled to himself a little malignantly, while poor Zhitkov could do nothing but twitch his moustaches, lift his eyebrows, and bury the whole of his hirsute countenance in his napkin.

After dinner, he went out onto the steps to smoke his pipe as usual, and he struck me as so miserable and forlorn, that, although I had never liked him, I joined myself on to him at once.

"How was it, Gavrila Fedulitch," I began without further beating about the bush, "that your affair with Evlampia Martinovna was broken off? I'd expected you to be married long ago."

The retired major looked at me dejectedly.

"A snake in the grass," he began, uttering each letter of each syllable with bitter distinctness, "has poisoned me with his fang, and turned all my hopes in life to ashes. And I could tell you, Dmitri Semyonovitch, all his hellish wiles, but I'm afraid of angering your mamma. ("You're young yet" — Prokofy's expression flashed across my mind.) "Even as it is" — Zhitkov groaned.

"Patience . . . patience . . . nothing else is left me. (He struck his fist upon his chest.) Patience, old soldier, patience. I served the Tsar faithfully . . . honourably . . . yes. I spared neither blood nor sweat, and now see what I am brought to. Had it been in the regiment — and the matter depending upon me," he continued after a short silence, spent in convulsively sucking at his cherrywood pipe, "I'd have . . . I'd have given it him with the flat side of my sword . . . three times over . . . till he'd had enough . . ."

Zhitkov took the pipe out of his mouth, and fixed his eyes on vacancy, as though admiring the picture he had conjured up.

Souvenir ran up, and began quizzing the major. I turned away from them, and determined, come what may, I would see Martin Petrovitch with my own eyes. . . . My boyish curiosity was greatly stirred.

XVIII

Next day I set out with my gun and dog, but without Prokofy, to the Eskovo copse. It was an exquisite day; I fancy there are no days like that in September anywhere but in Russia. The stillness was such that one could hear, a hundred paces off, the squirrel hopping over the dry

leaves, and the broken twig just feebly catching at the other branches, and falling, at last, on the soft grass — to lie there for ever, not to stir again till it rotted away. The air, neither warm nor chill, but only fragrant, and as it were keen, was faintly, deliciously stinging in my eyes and on my cheeks. A long spider-web, delicate as a silken thread, with a white ball in the middle, floated smoothly in the air, and sticking to the butt-end of my gun, stretched straight out in the air — a sign of settled and warm weather. The sun shone with a brightness as soft as moonlight. Wild snipe were to be met with pretty often; but I did not pay special attention to them. I knew that the copse went on almost to Harlov's homestead, right up to the hedge of his garden, and I turned my steps in that direction, though I could not even imagine how I should get into the place itself, and was even doubtful whether I ought to try to do so, as my mother was so angry with its new owners. Sounds of life and humanity reached me from no great distance. I listened. . . . Some one was coming through the copse . . . straight towards me.

"You should have said so straight out, dear," I heard a woman's voice.

"Be reasonable," another voice broke in, the voice of a man. "Can one do it all at once?"

I knew the voices. There was the gleam of a woman's blue gown through the reddening nut bushes. Beside it stood a dark full coat. Another instant — and there stepped out into the glade, five paces from me, Sletkin and Evlampia.

They were disconcerted at once. Evlampia promptly stepped back, away into the bushes. Sletkin thought a little, and came up to me. There was not a trace to be seen in his face of the obsequious meekness, with which he had paced up and down Harlov's courtyard, four months before, rubbing up my horse's snaffle. But neither could I perceive in it the insolent defiance, which had so struck me on the previous day, on the threshold of my mother's boudoir. It was still as white and pretty as ever, but seemed broader and more solid.

"Well, have you shot many snipe?" he asked me, raising his cap, smiling, and passing his hand over his black curls; "you are shooting in our copse. . . . You are very welcome. We would not hinder you. . . . Quite the contrary."

"I have killed nothing to-day," I rejoined, answering his first question; "and I will go out of your copse this instant."

Sletkin hurriedly put on his cap. "Indeed, why so? We would not drive you out — indeed, we're delighted. . . . Here's Evlampia Martinovna will say the same. Evlampia Martinovna, come here. Where have you hidden yourself?" Evlampia's head appeared behind the bushes. But she did not come up to us. She had grown prettier, and seemed taller and bigger than ever.

"I'm very glad, to tell the truth," Sletkin went on, "that I have met you. Though you are still young in years, you have plenty of good sense already. Your mother was pleased to be very angry with me yesterday — she would not listen to reason of any sort from me, but I declare, as before God, so before you now, I am not to blame in any way. We can't treat Martin Petrovitch otherwise than we do; he's fallen into complete dotage. One can't humour all his whims, really. But we show him all due respect. Only ask Evlampia Martinovna."

Evlampia did not stir; her habitual scornful smile flickered about her lips, and her large eyes watched us with no friendly expression.

"But why, Vladimir Vassilitch, have you sold Martin Petrovitch's mare?" (I was particularly impressed by that mare being in the possession of a peasant.)

"His mare, why did we sell it? Why, Lord have mercy on us — what use was she? She was simply eating her head off. But with the peasant she can work at the plough anyway. As for Martin Petrovitch, if he takes a fancy to drive out anywhere, he's only to ask us. We wouldn't refuse him a conveyance. On a holiday, we should be pleased."

"Vladimir Vassilitch," said Evlampia huskily, as though calling him away, and she still did not stir from her place. She was twisting some stalks of ripple grass round her fingers and snapping off their heads, slapping them against each other.

"About the page Maximka again," Sletkin went on, "Martin Petrovitch complains because we've taken him away and apprenticed him. But kindly consider the matter for yourself. Why, what had he to do waiting on Martin Petrovitch? Kick up his heels; nothing more. And he couldn't even wait on him properly; on account of his stupidity and his youth. Now we have sent him away to a harness-maker's. He'll be turned into a first-rate handicraftsman — and make a good thing of it for himself — and pay us ransom-money too. And, living in a small way as we do, that's a matter of importance. On a little farm like ours, one can't afford to let anything slip."

"And this is the man Martin Petrovitch called a 'poor stick,'" I thought. "But who reads to Martin Petrovitch now?" I asked.

"Why, what is there to read? He had one book — but, luckily, that's been mislaid somewhere. . . . And what use is reading at his age?"

"And who shaves him?" I asked again.

Sletkin gave an approving laugh, as though in response to an amusing joke. "Why, nobody. At first he used to singe his beard in the candle — but now he lets it be altogether. And it's lovely!"

"Vladimir Vassilitch!" Evlampia repeated insistently: "Vladimir Vassilitch!"

Sletkin made her a sign with his hand.

"Martin Petrovitch is clothed and cared for, and eats what we do.

What more does he want? He declared himself that he wanted nothing more in this world but to think of his soul. If only he would realise that everything now, however you look at it, is ours. He says too that we don't pay him his allowance. But we've not always got money ourselves; and what does he want with it, when he has everything provided him? And we treat him as one of the family too. I'm telling you the truth. The rooms, for instance, which he occupies — how we need them! there's simply not room to turn round without them; but we don't say a word — we put up with it. We even think how to provide amusement for him. There, on St. Peter's Day, I bought him some excellent hooks in the town — real English ones, expensive hooks, to catch fish. There are lots of carp in our pond. Let him sit and fish; in an hour or two, there'd be a nice little fish soup provided. The most suitable occupation for old men."

"Vladimir Vassilitch!" Evlampia called for the third time in an incisive tone, and she flung far away from her the grass she had been twisting in her fingers, "I am going!" Her eyes met mine. "I am going, Vladimir Vassilitch!" she repeated, and vanished behind a bush.

"I'm coming, Evlampia Martinovna, directly!" shouted Sletkin. "Martin Petrovitch himself agrees with us now," he went on, turning again to me. "At first he was offended, certainly, and even grumbled, until, you know, he realised; he was, you remember, a hot-tempered violent man — more's the pity! but there, he's grown quite meek now. Because he sees his own interest. Your mamma — mercy on us! how she pitched into me! . . . To be sure: she's a lady that sets as much store by her own authority as Martin Petrovitch used to do. But you come in and see for yourself. And you might put in a word when there's an opportunity. I feel Natalia Nikolaevna's bounty to me deeply. But we've got to live too."

"And how was it Zhitkov was refused?" I asked.

"Fedulitch? That dolt?" Sletkin shrugged his shoulders. "Why, upon my word, what use could he have been? His whole life spent among soldiers — and now he has a fancy to take up farming. He can keep the peasants up to the mark, says he, because he's been used to knocking men about. He can do nothing; even knocking men about wants some sense. Evlampia Martinovna refused him herself. He was a quite unsuitable person. All our farming would have gone to ruin with him!"

"Coo—y!" sounded Evlampia's musical voice.

"Coming! coming!" Sletkin called back. He held out his hand to me. Though unwillingly, I took it.

"I beg to take leave, Dmitri Semyonovitch," said Sletkin, showing all his white teeth. "Shoot wild snipe as much as you like. It's wild game, belonging to no one. But if you come across a hare — you spare it; that game is ours. Oh, and something else! won't you be having pups from your bitch? I should be obliged for one!"

"Coo—y!" Evlampia's voice rang out again.
"Coo—y!" Sletkin responded, and rushed into the bushes.

XIX

I REMEMBER, when I was left alone, I was absorbed in wondering how it was Harlov had not pounded Sletkin "into a jelly," as he said, and how it was Sletkin had not been afraid of such a fate. It was clear Martin Petrovitch really had grown "meek," I thought, and I had a still stronger desire to make my way into Eskovo, and get at least a glance at that colossus, whom I could never picture to myself subdued and tractable. I had reached the edge of the copse, when suddenly a big snipe, with a great rush of wings, darted up at my very feet, and flew off into the depths of the wood. I took aim; my gun missed fire. I was greatly annoyed; it had been such a fine bird, and I made up my mind to try if I couldn't make it rise a second time. I set off in the direction of its flight, and going some two hundred paces off into the wood I caught sight — in a little glade, under an overhanging birch-tree — not of the snipe, but of the same Sletkin once more. He was lying on his back, with both hands under his head, and with a smile of contentment gazing upwards at the sky, swinging his left leg, which was crossed over his right knee. He did not notice my approach. A few paces from him, Evlampia was walking slowly up and down the little glade, with downcast eyes. It seemed as though she were looking for something in the grass — mushrooms or something; now and then, she stooped and stretched out her hand. She was singing in a low voice. I stopped at once, and fell to listening. At first I could not make out what it was she was singing, but afterwards I recognised clearly the following well-known lines of the old ballad:

"Hither, hither, threatening storm-cloud,
Slay for me the father-in-law,
Strike for me the mother-in-law,
The young wife I will kill myself!"

Evlampia sang louder and louder; the last words she delivered with peculiar energy. Sletkin still lay on his back and laughed to himself, while she seemed all the time to be moving round and round him.

"Oh, indeed!" he commented at last. "The things that come into some people's heads!"

"What?" queried Evlampia.

Sletkin raised his head a little. "What? Why, what words were those you were uttering?"

"Why, you know, Volodya, one can't leave the words out of a song," answered Evlampia, and she turned and saw me. We both cried out aloud at once, and both rushed away in opposite directions.

I made my way hurriedly out of the copse, and crossing a narrow clearing, found myself facing Harlov's garden.

XX

I HAD no time. nor would it have been of any use, to deliberate over what I had seen. Only an expression kept recurring to my mind, "love spell," which I had lately heard. and over the signification of which I had pondered a good deal. I walked alongside the garden fence, and in a few moments, behind the silver poplars (they had not yet lost a single leaf, and the foliage was luxuriantly thick and brilliantly glistening), I saw the yard and two little lodges of Martin Petrovitch's homestead. The whole place struck me as having been tidied up and pulled into shape. On every side one could perceive traces of unflagging and severe supervision. Anna Martinovna came out on to the steps, and screwing up her blue-grey eyes, gazed for a long while in the direction of the copse.

"Have you seen the master?" she asked a peasant, who was walking across the yard.

"Vladimir Vassilitch?" responded the latter, taking his cap off. "He went into the copse, surely."

"I know, he went to the copse. Hasn't he come back? Haven't you seen him?"

"I've not seen him . . . nay."

The peasant continued standing bareheaded before Anna Martinovna.

"Well, you can go," she said. "Or no —— wait a bit —— where's Martin Petrovitch? Do you know?"

"Oh, Martin Petrovitch," answered the peasant, in a sing-song voice, alternately lifting his right and then his left hand, as though pointing away somewhere, "is sitting yonder, at the pond, with a fishing-rod. He's sitting in the reeds, with a rod. Catching fish, maybe, God knows."

"Very well . . . you can go," repeated Anna Martinovna; "and put away that wheel, it's lying about."

The peasant ran to carry out her command, while she remained standing a few minutes longer on the steps, still gazing in the direction of the copse. Then she clenched one fist menacingly, and went slowly back into the house. "Axiutka!" I heard her imperious voice calling within.

Anna Martinovna looked angry, and tightened her lips, thin enough at all times, with a sort of special energy. She was carelessly dressed, and a coil of loose hair had fallen down on to her shoulder. But in spite of the negligence of her attire, and her irritable humour, she struck me, just as before, as attractive, and I should have been delighted to kiss the narrow hand which looked malignant too, as she twice irritably pushed back the loose tress.

XXI

"CAN Martin Petrovitch have really taken to fishing?" I asked myself, as I turned towards the pond, which was on one side of the garden. I got on to the dam, looked in all directions. . . . Martin Petrovitch was nowhere to be seen. I bent my steps along one of the banks of the pond, and at last, at the very top of it, in a little creek, in the midst of flat broken-down stalks of reddish reed, I caught sight of a huge greyish mass. . . . I looked intently: it was Harlov. Bareheaded, unkempt, in a cotton smock torn at the seams, with his legs crossed under him, he was sitting motionless on the bare earth. So motionless was he that a sandpiper, at my approach, darted up from the dry mud a couple of paces from him, and flew with a flash of its little wings and a whistle over the surface of the water, showing that no one had moved to frighten him for a long while. Harlov's whole appearance was so extraordinary that my dog stopped short directly it saw him, lifted its tail, and growled. He turned his head a very little, and fixed his wild-looking eyes on me and my dog. He was greatly changed by his beard, though it was short, but thick and curly, in white tufts, like Astrachan fur. In his right hand lay the end of a rod, while the other end hovered feebly over the water. I felt an involuntary pang at my heart. I plucked up my spirits, however, and went up to him, and wished him good morning. He slowly blinked as though just awake.

"What are you doing, Martin Petrovitch," I began, "catching fish here?"

"Yes . . . fish," he answered huskily, and pulled up the rod, on which there fluttered a piece of line, a fathom length, with no hook on it.

"Your tackle is broken off," I observed, and noticed the same moment that there was no sign of bait-tin nor worms near Martin Petrovitch. . . . And what sort of fishing could there be in September?

"Broken off?" he said, and he passed his hand over his face. "But it's all the same!"

He dropped the rod in again.

"Natalia Nikolaevna's son?" he asked me, after the lapse of two minutes, during which I had been gazing at him with secret bewilderment. Though he had grown terribly thinner, still he seemed a giant. But what rags he was dressed in, and how utterly he had gone to pieces altogether!

"Yes," I answered, "I'm the son of Natalia Nikolaevna B."

"Is she well?"

"My mother is quite well. She was very much hurt at your refusal," I added; "she did not at all expect you would not wish to come and see her."

Martin Petrovitch's head sank on his breast. "Have you been there?" he asked, with a motion of his head.

"Where?"

"There, at the house. Haven't you? Go! What is there for you to do here? Go! It's useless talking to me. I don't like it."

He was silent for a while.

"You'd like to be always idling about with a gun! In my young days I used to be inclined the same way too. Only my father was strict and made me respect him too. Mind you, very different from fathers now-a-days. My father flogged me with a horsewhip, and that was the end of it! I'd to give up idling about! And so I respected him. . . . Oo! . . . Yes! . . ."

Harlov paused again.

"Don't you stop here," he began again. "You go along to the house. Things are managed there now — it's first-rate. Volodka" . . . Here he faltered for a second. "Our Volodka's a good hand at everything. He's a fine fellow! yes, indeed, and a fine scoundrel too!"

I did not know what to say; Martin Petrovitch spoke very tranquilly.

"And you go and see my daughters. You remember, I daresay, I had daughters. They're managers too . . . clever ones. But I'm growing old, my lad; I'm on the shelf. Time to repose, you know. . . ."

"Nice sort of repose!" I thought, glancing round. "Martin Petrovitch!" I uttered aloud, "you really must come and see us."

Harlov looked at me. "Go along, my lad, I tell you."

"Don't hurt mamma's feelings; come and see us."

"Go away, my lad, go away," persisted Harlov. "What do you want to talk to me for?"

"If you have no carriage, mamma will send you hers."

"Go along!"

"But, really and truly, Martin Petrovitch!"

Harlov looked down again, and I fancied that his cheeks, dingy as though covered with earth, faintly flushed.

"Really, do come," I went on. "What's the use of your sitting here? of your making yourself miserable?"

"Making myself miserable?" he commented hesitatingly.

"Yes, to be sure — making yourself miserable!" I repeated.

Harlov said nothing, and seemed lost in musing. Emboldened by his silence, I determined to be open, to act straightforwardly, bluntly. (Do not forget, I was only fifteen then.)

"Martin Petrovitch!" I began, seating myself beside him. "I know everything, you see, positively everything. I know how your son-in-law is treating you — doubtless with the consent of your daughters. And now you are in such a position . . . But why lose heart?"

Harlov still remained silent, and simply dropped in his line; while I — what a sensible fellow, what a sage I felt!

"Doubtless," I began again, "you acted imprudently in giving up everything to your daughters. It was most generous on your part, and I am

not going to blame you. In our days it is a quality only too rare! But since your daughters are so ungrateful, you ought to show a contempt — yes, a contempt — for them . . . and not fret——"

"Stop!" muttered Harlov suddenly, gnashing his teeth, and his eyes, staring at the pond, glittered wrathfully . . . "Go away!"

"But, Martin Petrovitch——"

"Go away, I tell you, . . . or I'll kill you!"

I had come quite close to him; but at the last words I instinctively jumped up. "What did you say, Martin Petrovitch?"

"I'll kill you, I tell you; go away!" With a wild moan, a roar, the words broke from Harlov's breast, but he did not turn his head, and still stared wrathfully straight in front of him. "I'll take you and fling you and your fool's counsel into the water. You shall learn to pester the old, little milksop!"

"He's gone mad!" flashed through my mind.

I looked at him more attentively, and was completely petrified: Martin Petrovitch was weeping!! Tear after tear rolled from his eyelashes down his cheeks . . . while his face had assumed an expression utterly savage. . . .

"Go away!" he roared once more, "or I'll kill you, by God! for an example to others!"

He was shaking all over from side to side, and showing his teeth like a wild boar. I snatched up my gun and took to my heels. My dog flew after me, barking. He, too, was frightened.

When I got home, I naturally did not, by so much as a word, to my mother, hint at what I had seen; but coming across Souvenir, I told him — the devil knows why — all about it. That loathsome person was so delighted at my story, shrieking with laughter, and even dancing with pleasure, that I could hardly forbear striking him.

"Ah! I should like," he kept repeating, breathless with laughter, "to see that fiend, the Swede, Harlov, crawling into the mud and sitting in it. . . ."

"Go over to the pond if you're so curious."

"Yes; but how if he kills me?"

I felt horribly sick at Souvenir, and regretted my ill-timed confidence. . . . Zhitkov, to whom he repeated my tale, looked at the matter somewhat differently.

"We shall have to call in the police," he concluded, "or, maybe, we may have to send for a battalion of military."

His forebodings with regard to the military battalion did not come true; but something extraordinary really did happen.

XXII

In the middle of October, three weeks after my interview with Martin Petrovitch, I was standing at the window of my own room in the second storey of our house, and thinking of nothing at all, I looked disconsolately into the yard and the road that lay beyond it. The weather had been disgusting for the last five days. Shooting was not even to be thought of. All things living had hidden themselves; even the sparrows made no sound, and the rooks had long ago disappeared from sight. The wind howled drearily, then whistled spasmodically. The low-hanging sky, unbroken by one streak of light, had changed from an unpleasant whitish to a leaden and still more sinister hue; and the rain, which had been pouring and pouring, mercilessly and unceasingly, had suddenly become still more violent and more driving, and streamed with a rushing sound over the panes. The trees had been stripped utterly bare, and turned a sort of grey. It seemed they had nothing left to plunder; yet the wind would not be denied, but set to harassing them once more. Puddles, clogged with dead leaves, stood everywhere. Big bubbles, continually bursting and rising up again, leaped and glided over them. Along the roads, the mud lay thick and impassable. The cold pierced its way indoors through one's clothes to the very bones. An involuntary shiver passed over the body, and how sick one felt at heart! Sick, precisely, not sad. It seemed there would never again in the world be sunshine, nor brightness, nor colour, but this rain and mire and grey damp, and raw fog would last for ever, and for ever would the wind whine and moan! Well, I was standing moodily at my window, and I remember a sudden darkness came on — a bluish darkness — though the clock only pointed to twelve. Suddenly I fancied I saw a bear dash across our yard from the gates to the steps! Not on all-fours, certainly, but as he is depicted when he gets up on his hind-paws. I could not believe my eyes. If it were not a bear I had seen, it was, any way, something enormous, black, shaggy. . . . I was still lost in wonder as to what it could be, when suddenly I heard below a furious knocking. It seemed something utterly unlooked for, something terrible was stumbling headlong into our house. Then began a commotion, a hurrying to and fro. . . .

I quickly went down the stairs, ran into the dining-room. . . .

At the drawing-room door facing me stood my mother, as though rooted to the spot. Behind her, peered several scared female faces. The butler, two footmen, and a page, with his mouth wide open with astonishment, were packed together in the doorway of the hall. In the middle of the dining-room, covered with mire, dishevelled, tattered, and soaking wet — so wet that steam rose all round and water was running in little streams over the floor — knelt, shaking ponderously, as it were, at the last gasp . . . the very monster I had seen dashing

across the yard! And who was this monster? Harlov! I came up on one side, and saw, not his face, but his head, which he was clutching, with both hands in the hair that blinded him with filth. He was breathing heavily, brokenly; something positively rattled in his throat — and in all the bespattered dark mass, the only thing that could be clearly distinguished was the tiny whites of the eyes, straying wildly about. He was awful! The dignitary came into my mind whom he had once crushed for comparing him to a mastodon. Truly, so might have looked some antediluvian creature that had just escaped another more powerful monster, attacking it in the eternal slime of the primeval swamps.

"Martin Petrovitch!" my mother cried at last, and she clasped her hands. "Is that you? Good God! Merciful heavens!"

"I . . . I . . ." we heard a broken voice, which seemed with effort and painfully to dwell on each sound. "Alas! It is I!"

"But what has happened to you? Mercy upon us!"

"Natalia Nikolaev . . . na . . . I have . . . run straight . . . to you . . . from home . . . on foot." . . .

"Through such mud! But you don't look like a man. Get up; sit down, anyway. . . . And you," she turned to the maid-servants, "run quick for clothes. And haven't you some dry clothes?" she asked the butler.

The butler gesticulated as though to say, Is it likely for such a size? . . . "But we could get a coverlet," he replied, "or, there's a new horse-rug."

"But get up, get up, Martin Petrovitch, sit down," repeated my mother.

"They've turned me out, madam," Harlov moaned suddenly, and he flung his head back and stretched his hands out before him. "They've turned me out, Natalia Nikolaevna! My own daughters, out of my own home." . . .

My mother sighed and groaned.

"What are you saying? Turned you out! What wickedness! what wickedness!" (She crossed herself.) "But do get up, Martin Petrovitch, I beg you!"

Two maid-servants came in with cloths and stood still before Harlov. It was clear they did not know how to attack this mountain of filth. "They have turned me out, madam, they have turned me out!" Harlov kept repeating meanwhile. The butler returned with a large woollen coverlet, and he, too, stood still in perplexity. Souvenir's little head was thrust in at a door and vanished again.

"Martin Petrovitch! get up! Sit down! and tell me everything properly," my mother commanded in a tone of determination.

Harlov rose. . . . The butler tried to assist him but only dirtied his hand, and, shaking his fingers, retreated to the door. Staggering and faltering, Harlov got to a chair and sat down. The maids again approached him with their cloths, but he waved them off with his hand, and refused

the coverlet. My mother did not herself, indeed, insist; to dry Harlov was obviously out of the question; they contented themselves with hastily wiping up his traces on the floor.

XXIII

"How have they turned you out?" my mother asked, as soon as he had a little time to recover himself.

"Madam! Natalia Nikolaevna!" he began, in a strained voice,—and again I was struck by the uneasy straying of his eyes; "I will tell you the truth; I am myself most of all to blame."

"Ay, to be sure; you would not listen to me at the time," assented my mother, sinking into an arm-chair and slightly moving a scented handkerchief before her nose; very strong was the smell that came from Harlov . . . the odour in a forest bog is not so strong.

"Alas! that's not where I erred, madam, but through pride. Pride has been my ruin, as it ruined the Tsar Navuhodonosor. I fancied God had given me my full share of sense, and if I resolved on anything, it followed it was right; so . . . and then the fear of death came . . . I was utterly confounded! 'I'll show,' said I, 'to the last, my power and my strength! I'll bestow all on them,—and they must feel it all their lives. . . .'" (Harlov suddenly was shaking all over. . . .) "Like a mangy dog they have driven me out of the house! This is their gratitude!"

"In what way—," my mother was beginning. . . .

"They took my page, Maximka, from me," Harlov interrupted her (his eyes were still wandering, he held both hands—the fingers interlaced—under his chin), "my carriage they took away, my monthly allowance they cut down, did not pay me the sum specified, cut me short all round, in fact; still I said nothing, bore it all! And I bore it by reason . . . alas! of my pride again. That my cruel enemies might not say, 'See, the old fool's sorry for it now'; and you too, do you remember, madam, had warned me; 'mind you, it's all to no purpose,' you said! and so I bore it. . . . Only, to-day I came into my room, and it was occupied already, and my bed they'd thrown out into the lumber-room! 'You can sleep there; we put up with you there even only out of charity; we've need of your room for the household.' And this was said to me by whom? Volodka Sletkin! the vile hound, the base cur!"

have tried everything, my good friend; kindness, affection, and threats, and I reasoned with them, and more besides! I bowed down before them . . . like this." (Harlov showed how he had bowed down.) "And all in vain. And all of it I bore! At the beginning, at first, I'd very different thoughts; I'll up, I thought, and kill them. I'll crush them all, so that not a trace remains of them! . . . I'll let them know! Well, but after, I submitted! It's a cross, I thought, laid upon me; it's to bid me make ready for death. And all at once, to-day, driven out, like a cur! And by whom? Volodka! And you asked about my daughters; they've no will of their own at all. They're Volodka's slaves! Yes!"

My mother wondered. "In Anna's case I can understand that; she's a wife. . . . But how comes it your second .

"Evlampia? She's worse than Anna! She's altogether given herself up into Volodka's hands. That's the reason she refused your soldier, too. At his, at Volodka's bidding. Anna, to be sure, ought to resent it, and she can't bear her sister, but she submits! He's bewitched them, the cursed scoundrel! Though she, Anna, I daresay, is pleased to think that Evlampia, who was always so proud, — and now see what she's come to! . . . O . . . alas . . . alas! God, my God!"

My mother looked uneasily towards me. I moved a little away as a precautionary measure, for fear I should be sent away altogether. . . .

"I am very sorry indeed, Martin Petrovitch," she began, "that my former protégé has caused you so much sorrow, and has turned out so badly. But I, too, was mistaken in him. . . . Who could have expected this of him?"

"Madam," Harlov moaned out, and he struck himself a blow on the chest, "I cannot bear the ingratitude of my daughters! I cannot, madam! You know I gave them everything, everything! And besides, my conscience has been tormenting me. Many things . . . alas! many things I have thought over, sitting by the pond, fishing. 'If you'd only done good to any one in your life!' was what I pondered upon, 'succoured the poor, set the peasants free, or something, to atone for having wrung their lives out of them. You must answer for them before God! Now their tears are revenged.' And what sort of life have they now? It was a deep pit even in my time — why disguise my sins? — but now there's no seeing the bottom! All these sins I have taken upon my soul; I have sacrificed my conscience for my children, and for this I'm laughed to scorn! Kicked out of the house, like a cur!"

"Don't think about that, Martin Petrovitch," observed my mother.

"And when he told me, your Volodka," Harlov went on with fresh force, "when he told me I was not to live in my room any more, — I laid every plank in that room with my own hands, — when he said that to me, — God only knows what passed within me! It was all confusion in my head, and like a knife in my heart. . . . Either to cut his throat or get away

out of the house! . . . So, I have run to you, my benefactress, Natalia Nikolaevna . . . where had I to lay my head? And then the rain, the filth . . . I fell down twenty times, maybe! And now . . . in such unseemly . . ."

Harlov scanned himself and moved restlessly in his chair, as though intending to get up.

"Say no more, Martin Petrovitch," my mother interposed hurriedly; "what does that signify? That you've made the floor dirty? That's no great matter! Come, I want to make you a proposition. Listen! They shall take you now to a special room, and make you up a clean bed, — you undress, wash, and lie down and sleep a little. . . ."

"Natalia Nikolaevna! There's no sleeping for me!" Harlov responded drearily. "It's as though there were hammers beating in my brain! Me! like some good-for-nothing beast! . . ."

"Lie down and sleep," my mother repeated insistently. "And then we'll give you some tea, — yes, and we'll have a talk. Don't lose heart, old friend! If they've driven you out of *your* house, in *my* house you will always find a home. . . . I have not forgotten, you know, that you saved my life."

"Benefactress!" moaned Harlov, and he covered his face with his hand. "*You* must save me now!"

This appeal touched my mother almost to tears. "I am ready and eager to help you, Martin Petrovitch, in everything I am able. But you must promise me that you will listen to me in future and dismiss every evil thought from you."

Harlov took his hands from his face. "If need be," he said, "I can forgive them, even!"

My mother nodded her head approvingly. "I am very glad to see you in such a truly Christian frame of mind, Martin Petrovitch; but we will talk of that later. Meanwhile, you put yourself to rights, and, most of all, sleep. Take Martin Petrovitch to what was the master's room, the green room," said my mother, addressing the butler, "and whatever he asks for, let him have it on the spot! Give orders for his clothes to be dried and washed, and ask the housekeeper for what linen is needed. Do you hear?"

"Yes, madam," responded the butler.

"And as soon as he's asleep, tell the tailor to take his measure; and his beard will have to be shaved. Not at once, but after."

"Yes, madam," repeated the butler. "Martin Petrovitch, kindly come." Harlov got up, looked at my mother, was about to go up to her, but stopped, swinging a bow from the waist, crossed himself three times to the image, and followed the steward. Behind him, I, too, slipped out of the room.

XXIV

The butler conducted Harlov to the green room, and at once ran off for the wardroom maid, as it turned out there were no sheets on the bed. Souvenir, who met us in the passage, and popped into the green room with us, promptly proceeded to dance, grinning and chuckling, round Harlov, who stood, his arms held a little away from him, and his legs apart, in the middle of the room, seeming lost in thought. The water was still dripping from him.

"The Swede! The Swede, Harlus!" piped Souvenir, doubling up and holding his sides. "Mighty founder of the illustrious race of Harlovs, look down on thy descendant! What does he look like? Dost thou recognise him? Ha, ha, ha! Your excellency, your hand, I beg; why, have you got on black gloves?"

I tried to restrain Souvenir, to put him to shame . . . but it was too late for that now.

"He called me parasite, toady! 'You've no roof,' said he, 'to call your own.' But now, no doubt about it, he's become as dependent as poor little me. Martin Petrovitch and Souvenir, the poor toady, are equal now. He'll have to live on charity too. They'll toss him the stale and dirty crust, that the dog has sniffed at and refused. . . . And they'll tell him to eat it, too. Ha, ha, ha!"

Harlov still stood motionless, his head drawn in, his legs and arms held a little apart.

"Martin Harlov, a nobleman born!" Souvenir went on shrieking. "What airs he used to give himself. Just look at me! Don't come near, or I'll knock you down! . . . And when he was so clever as to give away and divide his property, didn't he crow! 'Gratitude! . . . ' he cackled, 'gratitude!' But why were you so mean to me? Why didn't you make me a present? Maybe, I should have felt it more. And you see I was right when I said they'd strip you bare, and . . ."

"Souvenir!" I screamed; but Souvenir was in nowise daunted. Harlov still did not stir. It seemed as though he were only now beginning to be aware how soaking wet everything was that he had on, and was waiting to be helped off with his clothes. But the butler had not come back.

"And a military man too!" Souvenir began again. "In the year twelve, he saved his country; he showed proofs of his valour. I see how it is. Stripping the frozen marauders of their breeches is work he's quite equal to, but when the hussies stamp their feet at him he's frightened out of his skin."

"Souvenir!" I screamed a second time.

Harlov looked askance at Souvenir. Till that instant he seemed not to have noticed his presence, and only my exclamation aroused his attention.

"Look out, brother," he growled huskily, "don't dance yourself into trouble."

Souvenir fairly rolled about with laughter. "Ah, how you frighten me, most honoured brother. You're a formidable person, to be sure. You must comb your hair, at any rate, or, God forbid, it'll get dry, and you'll never wash it clean again; you'll have to mow it with a sickle." Souvenir all of a sudden got into a fury. "And you give yourself airs still. A poor outcast, and he gives himself airs. Where's your home now? you'd better tell me that, you were always boasting of it. 'I have a home of my own,' he used to say, 'but you're homeless.' 'My ancestral roof,' he would say." Souvenir pounced on this phrase as an inspiration.

"Mr. Bitchkov," I protested. "What are you about? you forget yourself."

But he still persisted in chattering, and still danced and pranced up and down quite close to Harlov. And still the butler and the wardroom maid did not come.

I felt alarmed. I began to notice that Harlov, who had, during his conversation with my mother, gradually grown quieter, and even towards the end apparently resigned himself to his fate, was beginning to get worked up again. He breathed more hurriedly, it seemed as though his face were suddenly swollen under his ears, his fingers twitched, his eyes again began moving restlessly in the dark mask of his grim face. . . .

"Souvenir, Souvenir!" I cried. "Stop it, I'll tell mamma."

But Souvenir seemed possessed by frenzy. "Yes, yes, most honoured brother," he began again, "here we find ourselves, you and I, in the most delicate position. While your daughters, with your son-in-law, Vladimir Vassilitch, are having a fine laugh at you under your roof. And you should at least curse them, as you promised. Even that you're not equal to. To be sure, how could you hold your own with Vladimir Vassilitch? Why, you used to call him Volodka, too. You call him Volodka. *He* is Vladimir Vassilitch, Mr. Sletkin, a landowner, a gentleman, while — what are you, pray?"

A furious roar drowned Souvenir's words. . . . Harlov was aroused. His fists were clenched and lifted, his face was purple, there was foam on his drawn lips, he was shaking with rage. "Roof, you say!" he thundered in his iron voice, "curse, you say . . . No! I will not curse them. . . . They don't care for that . . . But the roof . . . I will tear the roof off them, and they shall have no roof over their heads, like me. They shall learn to know Martin Harlov. My strength is not all gone yet; they shall learn to laugh at me! . . . They shall have no roof over their heads!"

I was stupefied; never in my life had I witnessed such boundless anger. Not a man — a wild beast — paced to and fro before me. I was stupefied . . . as for Souvenir, he had hidden under the table in his fright.

"They shall not!" Harlov shouted for the last time, and almost knocking over the butler and the wardroom maid, he rushed away out of the house. . . . He dashed headlong across the yard, and vanished through the gates.

XXV

My mother was terribly angry when the butler came with an abashed countenance to report Martin Petrovitch's sudden and unexpected retreat. He did not dare to conceal the cause of this retreat; I was obliged to confirm his story. "Then it was all your doing!" my mother cried, at the sight of Souvenir, who had run in like a hare, and was even approaching to kiss her hand: "Your vile tongue is to blame for it all!" "Excuse me, d'rectly, d'rectly . . ." faltered Souvenir, stuttering and drawing back his elbows behind him. "D'rectly, . . . d'rectly . . . I know your 'd'rectly,'" my mother repeated reprovingly, and she sent him out of the room. Then she rang the bell, sent for Kvitsinsky, and gave him orders to set off on the spot to Eskovo, with a carriage, to find Martin Petrovitch at all costs, and to bring him back. "Do not let me see you without him," she concluded. The gloomy Pole bowed his head without a word, and went away.

I went back to my own room, sat down again at the window, and I pondered a long while, I remember, on what had taken place before my eyes. I was puzzled; I could not understand how it was that Harlov, who had endured the insults of his own family almost without a murmur, had lost all self-control, and been unable to put up with the jeers and pinpricks of such an abject creature as Souvenir. I did not understand in those days what insufferable bitterness there may sometimes be in a foolish taunt, even when it comes from lips one scorns. . . . The hated name of Sletkin, uttered by Souvenir, had been like a spark thrown into powder. The sore spot could not endure this final prick.

About an hour passed by. Our coach drove into the yard; but our steward sat in it alone. And my mother had said to him — "don't let me see you without him." Kvitsinsky jumped hurriedly out of the carriage, and ran up the steps. His face had a perturbed look — something very unusual with him. I promptly rushed downstairs, and followed at his heels into the drawing-room. "Well? have you brought him?" asked my mother.

"I have not brought him," answered Kvitsinsky — "and I could not bring him."

"How's that? Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"What has happened to him? A fit?"

"No; nothing has happened."

"How is it you didn't bring him?"

"He's pulling his house to pieces."

"What?"

"He's standing on the roof of the new building, and pulling it to pieces. Forty boards or more, I should guess, must have come down by now, and some five of the rafters too." ("They shall not have a roof over their heads." Harlov's words came back to me.)

My mother stared at Kvitsinsky. "Alone . . . he's standing on the roof, and pulling the roof down?"

"Exactly so. He is walking about on the flooring of the garret in the roof, and smashing right and left of him. His strength, you are aware, madam, is superhuman. And the roof too, one must say, is a poor affair; half-inch deal battens, laid wide apart, one inch nails."

My mother looked at me, as though wishing to make sure whether she had heard aright. "Half-inches wide apart" she repeated, obviously not understanding the meaning of one word. "Well, what then?" she said at last.

"I have come for instructions. There's no doing anything without men to help. The peasants there are all limp with fright."

"And his daughters — what of them?"

"His daughters are doing nothing. They're running to and fro, shouting . . . this and that . . . all to no purpose."

"And is Sletkin there?"

"He's there too. He's making more outcry than all of them — but he can't do anything."

"And Martin Petrovitch is standing on the roof?"

"On the roof . . . that is, in the garret — and pulling the roof to pieces."

"Yes, yes," said my mother, "half-inches wide apart."

The position was obviously a serious one. What steps were to be taken? Send to the town for the police captain? Get together the peasants? My mother was quite at her wits' end. Zhitkov, who had come in to dinner, was nonplussed too. It is true, he made another reference to a battalion of military; he offered no advice, however, but confined himself to looking submissive and devoted. Kvitsinsky, seeing he would not get at any instructions, suggested to my mother — with the contemptuous respectfulness peculiar to him — that if she would authorise him to take a few of the stable-boys, gardeners, and other house-serfs, he would make an effort . . .

"Yes, yes," my mother cut him short, "do make an effort, dear Vikenty Osipitch! Only make haste, please, and I will take all responsibility on myself!"

Kvitsinsky smiled coldly. "One thing let me make clear, madam, beforehand; it's impossible to reckon on any result, seeing that Mr. Harlov's strength is so great, and he is so desperate too; he feels himself to have been very cruelly wronged!"

"Yes, yes," my mother assented; "and it's all that vile Souvenir's fault! Never will I forgive him for it. Go and take the servants and set off, Vikenty Osipitch!"

"You'd better take plenty of cord, Mr. Steward, and some fire-escape tackle," Zhitkov brought out in his bass — "and if there is such a thing

as a net, it would be as well to take that along too. We once had in our regiment . . ."

"Kindly refrain from instructing me, sir." Kvitsinsky cut him short, with an air of vexation; "I know what is needed without your aid."

Zhitkov was offended, and protested that as he imagined he, too, was called upon . . .

"No, no!" interposed my mother; "you'd better stop where you are . . . Let Vikenty Osipitch act alone . . . Make haste, Vikenty Osipitch!"

Zhitkov was still more offended, while Kvitsinsky bowed and went out.

I rushed off to the stable, hurriedly saddled my horse myself, and set off at a gallop along the road to Eskovo.

XXVI

THE rain had ceased, but the wind was blowing with redoubled force — straight into my face. Half-way there, the saddle almost slipped round under me; the girth had got loose; I got off and tried to tighten the straps with my teeth. . . . All at once I heard someone calling me by my name . . . Souvenir was running towards me across the green fields. "What!" he shouted to me from some way off, "was your curiosity too much for you? But it's no use . . . I went over there, straight, at Harlov's heels . . . Such a state of things you never saw in your life!"

"You want to enjoy what you have done," I said indignantly, and, jumping on my horse, I set off again at a gallop. But the indefatigable Souvenir did not give me up, and chuckled and grinned, even as he ran. At last, Eskovo was reached — there was the dam, and there the long hedge and willow-tree of the homestead . . . I rode up to the gate, dismounted, tied up my horse, and stood still in amazement.

Of one third of the roof of the newer house, of the front part, nothing was left but the skeleton; boards and litter lay in disorderly heaps on the ground on both sides of the building. Even supposing the roof to be, as Kvitsinsky had said, a poor affair, even so, it was something incredible! On the floor of the garret, in a whirl of dust and rubbish, a blackish grey mass was moving to and fro with rapid ungainly action, at one moment shaking the remaining chimney, built of brick (the other had fallen already), then tearing up the boarding and flinging it down below, then clutching at the very rafters. It was Harlov. He struck me as being exactly like a bear at this moment too; the head, and back, and shoulders were a bear's, and he put his feet down wide apart without bending the insteps — also like a bear. The bitter wind was blowing upon him from every side, lifting his matted locks. It was horrible to see, here and there, red patches of bare flesh through the rents in his tattered clothes; it was horrible to hear his wild husky muttering. There were a lot of people in the yard; peasant-women, boys, and servant-girls stood close along the hedge. A

few peasants huddled together in a separate group, a little way off. The old village priest, whom I knew, was standing, bareheaded, on the steps of the other house, and holding a brazen cross in both hands, from time to time, silently and hopelessly, raised it, and, as it were, showed it to Harlov. Beside the priest, stood Evlampia with her back against the wall, gazing fixedly at her father. Anna, at one moment, pushed her head out of the little window, then vanished, then hurried into the yard, then went back into the house. Sletkin — pale all over, livid — in an old dressing-gown and smoking-cap, with a single-barrelled rifle in his hands, kept running to and fro with little steps. He had completely *gone Jewish*, as it is called. He was gasping, threatening, shaking, pointing the gun at Harlov, then letting it drop back on his shoulder — pointing it again, shrieking, weeping. . . . On seeing Souvenir and me he simply flew to us.

"Look, look, what is going on here!" he wailed — "look! He's gone out of his mind, he's raving mad . . . and see what he's doing! I've sent for the police already — but no one comes! No one comes! If I do fire at him, the law couldn't touch me, for every man has a right to defend his own property! And I will fire! . . . By God, I'll fire!"

He ran off toward the house.

"Martin Petrovitch, look out! If you don't get down, I'll fire!"

"Fire away!" came a husky voice from the roof. "Fire away! And meanwhile here's a little present for you!"

A long plank flew up, and, turning over twice in the air, came violently to the earth, just at Sletkin's feet. He positively jumped into the air, while Harlov chuckled.

"Merciful Jesus!" faltered some one behind me. I looked round: Souvenir. "Ah!" I thought, "he's left off laughing now!"

Sletkin clutched a peasant, who was standing near, by the collar.

"Climb up now, climb up, climb up, all of you, you devils," he wailed, shaking the man with all his force, "save my property!"

The peasant took a couple of steps forward, threw his head back, waved his arms, shouted — "hi! here! master!" shifted from one foot to the other uneasily, and then turned back.

"A ladder! bring a ladder!" Sletkin addressed the other peasants.

"Where are we to get it?" was heard in answer.

"And if we had a ladder," one voice pronounced deliberately, "who'd care to climb up? Not such fools! He'd wring your neck for you — in a twinkling!"

"He'd kill one in no time," said one young lad with flaxen hair and a half-idiotic face.

"To be sure he would," the others confirmed. It struck me that, even if there had been no obvious danger, the peasants would yet have been loath to carry out their new owner's orders. They almost approved of Harlov, though they were amazed at him.

"Ugh, you robbers!" moaned Sletkin; "you shall all catch it . . ."

But at this moment, with a heavy rumble, the last chimney came crashing down, and, in the midst of the cloud of yellow dust that flew up instantly, Harlov — uttering a piercing shriek and lifting his bleeding hands high in the air — turned facing us. Sletkin pointed the gun at him again.

Evlampia pulled him back by the elbow.

"Don't interfere!" he snarled savagely at her.

"And you — don't you dare!" she answered; and her blue eyes flashed menacingly under her scowling brows. "Father's pulling his house down. It's his own."

"You lie: it's ours!"

"You say ours; but I say it's his."

Sletkin hissed with fury; Evlampia's eyes seemed stabbing him in the face.

"Ah, how d'ye do! my delightful daughter!" Harlov thundered from above. "How d'ye do! Evlampia Martinovna! How are you getting on with your sweetheart? Are your kisses sweet, and your fondling?"

"Father!" rang out Evlampia's musical voice.

"Eh, daughter?" answered Harlov: and he came down to the very edge of the wall. His face, as far as I could make it out, wore a strange smile, a bright, mirthful — and for that very reason peculiarly strange and evil — smile. . . . Many years later I saw just the same smile on the face of a man condemned to death.

"Stop, father; come down. We are in fault; we give everything back to you. Come down."

"What do you mean by disposing of what's ours?" put in Sletkin. Evlampia merely scowled more angrily.

"I give you back my share. I give up everything. Give over, come down, father! Forgive us; forgive me."

Harlov still went on smiling. "It's too late, my darling," he said, and each of his words rang out like brass. "Too late your stony heart is touched! The rock's started rolling downhill — there's no holding it back now! And don't look to me now; I'm a doomed man! You'd do better to look to your Volodka: see what a pretty fellow you've picked out! And look to your hellish sister; there's her foxy nose yonder thrust out of the window; she's peering yonder after that husband of hers! No, my good friends; you would rob me of a roof over my head, so I will leave you not one beam upon another! With my own hands I built it, with my own hands I destroy it, — yes, with my hands alone! See, I've taken no axe to help me!"

He snorted at his two open hands, and clutched at the centre beam again.

"Enough, father," Evlampia was saying meanwhile, and her voice had grown marvellously caressing, "let bygones be bygones. Come, trust me;

you always trusted me. Come, get down: come to me to my little room, to my soft bed. I will dry you and warm you: I will bind up your wounds; see, you have torn your hands. You shall live with me as in Christ's bosom: food shall be sweet to you — and sleep sweeter yet. Come, we have done wrong! yes, we were puffed up, we have sinned; come, forgive!"

Harlov shook his head. "Talk away! Me believe you! Never again! You've murdered all trust in my heart! You've murdered everything! I was an eagle, and became a worm for you . . . and you, — would you even crush the worm? Have done! I loved you, you know very well, — but now you are no daughter to me, and I'm no father to you . . . I'm a doomed man! Don't meddle! As for you, fire away, coward, mighty man of valour!" Harlov bellowed suddenly at Sletkin. "Why is it you keep aiming and don't shoot? Are you mindful of the law; if the recipient of a gift commits an attempt upon the life of the giver," Harlov enunciated distinctly, "then the giver is empowered to claim everything back again? Ha, ha! don't be afraid, law-abiding man! I'd make no claims. I'll make an end of everything myself. . . . Here goes!"

"Father!" for the last time Evlampia besought him.

"Silence!"

"Martin Petrovitch! brother, be generous and forgive!" faltered Souvenir.

"Father! dear father!"

"Silence, bitch!" shouted Harlov. At Souvenir he did not even glance, — he merely spat in his direction.

XXVII

At that instant, Kvitsinsky, with all his retinue — in three carts — appeared at the gates. The tired horses panted, the men jumped out, one after another, into the mud.

"Aha!" Harlov shouted at the top of his voice. "An army . . . here it comes, an army! A whole army they're sending against me! Capital! Only I give warning — if any one comes up here to me on the roof, I'll send him flying down, head over heels! I'm an inhospitable master; I don't like visitors at wrong times! No indeed!"

He was hanging with both hands on to the front rafters of the roof, the so-called standards of the gable, and beginning to shake them violently. Balancing on the edge of the garret flooring, he dragged them, as it were, after him, chanting rhythmically like a bargeman, "One more pull! one more! o-oh!"

Sletkin ran up to Kvitsinsky and was beginning to whimper and pour out complaints. . . . The latter begged him "not to interfere," and proceeded to carry out the plan he had evolved. He took up his position in front of the house, and began, by way of diversion, to explain to Harlov that what he was about was unworthy of his rank. . . .

"One more pull! one more!" chanted Harlov. . . . "That Natalia Nikolaevna was greatly displeased at his proceedings, and had not expected it of him." . . .

"One more pull! one more! o-oh!" Harlov chanted . . . while, meantime, Kvitsinsky had despatched the four sturdiest and boldest of the stable-boys to the other side of the house to clamber up the roof from behind. Harlov, however, detected the plan of attack; he suddenly left the standards and ran quickly to the back part of the roof. His appearance was so alarming that the two stable-boys who had already got up to the garret, dropped instantly back again to the ground by the water-pipe, to the great glee of the serf boys, who positively roared with laughter. Harlov shook his fist after them and, going back to the front part of the house, again clutched at the standards and began once more loosening them, singing again, like a bargeman.

Suddenly he stopped, stared. . . .

"Maximushka, my dear! my friend!" he cried; "is it you?"

I looked round. . . . There, actually, was Maximka, stepping out from the crowd of peasants. Grinning and showing his teeth, he walked forward. His master, the tailor, had probably let him come home for a holiday.

"Climb up to me, Maximushka, my faithful servant," Harlov went on; "together let us rid ourselves of evil Tartar folk, of Lithuanian thieves!"

Maximka, still grinning, promptly began climbing up the roof. . . . But they seized him and pulled him back — goodness knows why; possibly as an example to the rest; he could hardly have been much aid to Martin Petrovitch.

"Oh, all right! Good!" Harlov pronounced, in a voice of menace, and again he took hold of the standards.

"Vikenty Osipovitch! with your permission, I'll shoot," Sletkin turned to Kvitsinsky; "more to frighten him, see, than anything; my gun's only charged with snipe-shot." But Kvitsinsky had not time to answer him, when the front couple of standards, viciously shaken in Harlov's iron hands, heeled over with a loud crack and crashed into the yard; and with it, not able to stop himself, came Harlov too, and fell with a heavy thud on the earth. Every one shuddered and drew a deep breath. . . . Harlov lay without stirring on his breast, and on his back lay the top central beam of the roof, which had come down with the falling gable's timbers.

XXVIII

THEY ran up to Harlov, rolled the beam off him, turned him over on his back. His face was lifeless, there was blood about his mouth; he did not seem to breathe. "The breath is gone out of him," muttered the peasants, standing about him. They ran to the well for water, brought a whole bucketful, and drenched Harlov's head. The mud and dust ran off his

face, but he looked as lifeless as ever. They dragged up a bench, set it in the house itself, and with difficulty raising the huge body of Martin Petrovitch, laid it there with the head to the wall. The page Maximka approached, fell on one knee, and, his other leg stretched far behind him, in a theatrical way, supported his former master's arm. Evlampia, pale as death, stood directly facing her father, her great eyes fastened immovably upon him. Anna and Sletkin did not come near him. All were silent, all, as it were, waited for something. At last we heard broken, smacking noises in Harlov's throat, as though he were swallowing. . . . Then he feebly moved one, his right, hand (Maximka supported the left), opened one, the right eye, and slowly gazing about him, as though drunken with some fearful drunkenness, groaned, articulated, stammering, "I'm sma-ashed" . . . and as though after a moment's thought, added, "here it is, the ra . . . . aven co . . . olt!" The blood suddenly gushed thickly from his mouth . . . his whole body began to quiver. . . .

"The end!" I thought. . . . But once more Harlov opened the same eye (the left eyelid lay as motionless as on a dead man's face), and fixing it on Evlampia, he articulated, hardly above a breath, "Well, daugh . . . ter . . . you, I do not . . ."

Kvitsinsky, with a sharp motion of his hand, beckoned to the priest, who was still standing on the step. . . . The old man came up, his narrow cassock clinging about his feeble knees. But suddenly there was a sort of horrible twitching in Harlov's legs and in his stomach too; an irregular contraction passed upwards over his face. Evlampia's face seemed quivering and working in the same way. Maximka began crossing himself. . . . I was seized with horror; I ran out to the gates, squeezed myself close to them, not looking round. A minute later a soft murmur ran through the crowd, behind my back, and I understood that Martin Petrovitch was no more.

His skull had been fractured by the beam and his ribs injured, as it appeared at the post-mortem examination.

XXIX

WHAT had he wanted to say to her as he lay dying? I asked myself as I went home on my cob: "I do not . . . forgive," or "do not . . . pardon." The rain had come on again, but I rode at a walking pace. I wanted to be alone as long as possible; I wanted to give myself up to my reflections, unchecked. Souvenir had gone back in one of the carts that had come with Kvitsinsky. Young and frivolous as I was at that time, the sudden sweeping change (not in mere details only) that is invariably called forth in all hearts by the coming of death — expected or unexpected, it makes no difference! — its majesty, its gravity, and its truthfulness could not fail to impress me. I was impressed too, . . . but for all that, my troubled, child-

ish eyes noted many things at once; they noted how Sletkin, hurriedly and furtively as though it were something stolen, popped the gun out of sight; how he and his wife became, both of them, instantly the object of a sort of unspoken but universal aloofness. To Evlampia, though her fault was probably no less than her sister's, this aloofness did not extend. She even aroused a certain sympathy, when she fell at her dead father's feet. But that she too was guilty, that was none the less felt by all. "The old man was wronged," said a grey-haired peasant with a big head, leaning, like some ancient judge, with both hands and his beard on a long staff: "on your soul lies the sin! You wronged him!" That saying was at once accepted by every one as the final judgment. The peasants' sense of justice found expression in it, I felt that at once. I noticed too that, at the first, Sletkin did not *dare* to give directions. Without him, they lifted up the body and carried it into the other house. Without asking him, the priest went for everything needful to the church, while the village elder ran to the village to send off a cart and horse to the town. Even Anna Martinovna did not venture to use her ordinary imperious tone in ordering the samovar to be brought, "for hot water, to wash the deceased." Her orders were more like an entreaty, and she was answered rudely. . . .

I was absorbed all the while by the question, What was it exactly he wanted to say to his daughter? Did he want to forgive her or to curse her? Finally I decided that it was — forgiveness.

Three days later, the funeral of Martin Petrovitch took place. The cost of the ceremony was undertaken by my mother, who was deeply grieved at his death, and gave orders that no expense was to be spared. She did not herself go to the church, because she was unwilling, as she said, to set eyes on those two vile hussies and that nasty little Jew. But she sent Kvitsinsky, me, and Zhitkov, though from that time forward she always spoke of the latter as a regular old woman. Souvenir she did not admit to her presence, and was furious with him for long after, saying that he was the murderer of her friend. He felt his disgrace acutely; he was continually running, on tiptoe, up and down the room, next to the one where my mother was; he gave himself up to a sort of scared and abject melancholy, shuddering and muttering, "d'rectly!"

In church, and during the procession, Sletkin struck me as having recovered his self-possession. He gave directions and bustled about in his old way, and kept a greedy look-out that not a superfluous farthing should be spent, though his own pocket was not in question. Maximka, in a new Cossack dress, also a present from my mother, gave vent to such tenor notes in the choir, that certainly no one could have any doubts as to the sincerity of his devotion to the deceased. Both the sisters were duly attired in mourning, but they seemed more stupefied than grieved, especially Evlampia. Anna wore a meek, Lenten air, but made no attempt to weep, and was continually passing her handsome, thin hand over her hair and

cheek. Evlampia seemed deep in thought all the time. The universal, unbending alienation, condemnation, which I had noticed on the day of Harlov's death, I detected now too on the faces of all the people in the church, in their actions and their glances, but still more grave and, as it were, impersonal. It seemed as though all those people felt that the sin into which the Harlov family had fallen — this great sin — had gone now before the presence of the one righteous Judge, and that for that reason, there was no need now for them to trouble themselves and be indignant. They prayed devoutly for the soul of the dead man, whom in life they had not specially liked, whom they had feared indeed. Very abruptly had death overtaken him.

"And it's not as though he had been drinking heavily, brother," said one peasant to another, in the porch.

"Nay, without drink he was drunken indeed," responded the other.

"He was cruelly wronged," the first peasant repeated the phrase that summed it up.

"Cruelly wronged," the others murmured after him.

"The deceased was a hard master to you, wasn't he?" I asked a peasant, whom I recognised as one of Harlov's serfs.

"He was a master, certainly," answered the peasant, "but still . . . he was cruelly wronged!"

"Cruelly wronged," . . . I heard again in the crowd.

At the grave, too, Evlampia stood, as it were, lost. Thoughts were torturing her . . . bitter thoughts. I noticed that Sletkin, who several times addressed some remark to her, she treated as she had once treated Zhitkov, and worse still.

Some days later, there was a rumour all over our neighbourhood, that Evlampia Martinovna had left the home of her fathers for ever, leaving all the property that came to her to her sister and brother-in-law, and only taking some hundreds of roubles. . . . "So Anna's bought her out, it seems!" remarked my mother; "but you and I, certainly," she added, addressing Zhitkov, with whom she was playing picquet — he took Souvenir's place, "are not skilful hands!" Zhitkov looked dejectedly at his mighty palms. . . . "Hands like that! Not skilful!" he seemed to be saying to himself. . . .

Soon after, my mother and I went to live in Moscow, and many years passed before it was my lot to behold Martin Petrovitch's daughters again.

XXX

But I did see them again. Anna Martinovna I came across in the most ordinary way.

After my mother's death I paid a visit to our village, where I had not been for over fifteen years, and there I received an invitation from the

mediator (at that time the process of settling the boundaries between the peasants and their former owners was taking place over the whole of Russia with a slowness not yet forgotten) to a meeting of the other landowners of our neighbourhood, to be held on the estate of the widow Anna Sletkin. The news that my mother's "nasty little Jew," with the prune-coloured eyes, no longer existed in this world, caused me, I confess, no regret whatever. But it was interesting to get a glimpse of his widow. She had the reputation in the neighbourhood of a first-rate manager. And so it proved; her estate and homestead and the house itself (I could not help glancing at the roof; it was an iron one) all turned out to be in excellent order; everything was neat, clean, tidied-up, where needful — painted, as though its mistress were a German. Anna Martinovna herself, of course, looked older. But the peculiar, cold, and, as it were, wicked charm which had once so fascinated me had not altogether left her. She was dressed in rustic fashion, but elegantly. She received us, not cordially — that word was not applicable to her — but courteously, and on seeing me, a witness of that fearful scene, not an eyelash quivered. She made not the slightest reference to my mother, nor her father, nor her sister, nor her husband.

She had two daughters, both very pretty, slim young things, with charming little faces and a bright and friendly expression in their black eyes. There was a son, too, a little like his father, but still a boy to be proud of! During the discussions between the landowners, Anna Martinovna's attitude was composed and dignified, she showed no sign of being specially obstinate, nor specially grasping. But none had a truer perception of their own interests than she of hers; none could more convincingly expound and defend their rights. All the laws "pertinent to the case," even the Minister's circulars, she had thoroughly mastered. She spoke little, and in a quiet voice, but every word she uttered was to the point. It ended in our all signifying our agreement to all her demands, and making concessions, which we could only marvel at ourselves. On our way home, some of the worthy landowners even used harsh words of themselves; they all hummed and hawed, and shook their heads.

"Ah, she's got brains that woman!" said one.

"A tricky baggage!" put in another less delicate proprietor. "Smooth in word, but cruel in deed!"

"And a screw into the bargain!" added a third; "not a glass of vodka nor a morsel of caviare for us — what do you think of that?"

"What can one expect of her?" suddenly croaked a gentleman who had been silent till then, "every one knows she poisoned her husband!"

To my astonishment, nobody thought fit to controvert this awful and certainly unfounded charge! I was the more surprised at this, as, in spite of the slighting expressions I have reported, all of them felt respect for Anna Martinovna, not excluding the indelicate landowner. As for the mediator, he waxed positively eloquent.

"Put her on a throne," he exclaimed, "she'd be another Semiramis or Catherine the Second! The discipline among her peasants is a perfect model. . . . The education of her children is model! What a head! What brains!"

Without going into the question of Semiramis and Catherine, there was no doubt Anna Martinovna was living a very happy life. Ease, inward and external, the pleasant serenity of spiritual health, seemed the very atmosphere about herself, her family, all her surroundings. How far she had deserved such happiness . . . that is another question. Such questions, though, are only propounded in youth. Everything in the world, good and bad, comes to man, not through his deserts, but in consequence of some as yet unknown but logical laws which I will not take upon myself to indicate, though I sometimes fancy I have a dim perception of them.

XXXI

I QUESTIONED the mediator about Evlampia Martinovna, and learnt that she had been lost sight of completely ever since she left home, and probably "had departed this life long ago."

So our worthy mediator expressed himself . . . but I am convinced that I *have seen* Evlampia, that I have come across her. This was how it was.

Four years after my interview with Anna Martinovna, I was spending the summer at Murino, a little hamlet near Petersburg, a well-known resort of summer visitors of the middle class. The shooting was pretty decent about Murino at that time, and I used to go out with my gun almost every day. I had a companion on my expeditions, a man of the tradesman class, called Vikulov, a very sensible and good-natured fellow; but, as he said of himself, of no position whatever. This man had been simply everywhere, and everything! Nothing could astonish him, he knew everything — but he cared for nothing but shooting and wine. Well, one day we were on our way home to Murino, and we chanced to pass a solitary house, standing at the cross-roads, and enclosed by a high, close paling. It was not the first time I had seen the house, and every time it excited my curiosity. There was something about it mysterious, locked-up, grimly-dumb, something suggestive of a prison or a hospital. Nothing of it could be seen from the road but its steep, dark, red-painted roof. There was only one pair of gates in the whole fence; and these seemed fastened and never opened. No sound came from the other side of them. For all that, we felt that some one was certainly living in the house; it had not at all the air of a deserted dwelling. On the contrary, everything about it was stout, and tight, and strong, as if it would stand a siege!

"What is that fortress?" I asked my companion. "Don't you know?"

Vikulov gave a sly wink. "A fine building, eh? The police-captain of these parts gets a nice little income out of it!"

"How's that?"

"I'll tell you. You've heard, I daresay, of the Flagellant dissenters — that do without priests, you know?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's there that their chief mother lives."

"A woman?"

"Yes — the mother; a mother of God, they say."

"Nonsense!"

"I tell you, it is so. She is a strict one, they say. . . . A regular commander-in-chief! She rules over thousands! I'd take her, and all these mothers of God . . . But what's the use of talking?"

He called his Pegashka, a marvellous dog, with an excellent scent, but with no notion of setting. Vikulov was obliged to tie her hind paws to keep her from running so furiously.

His words sank into my memory. I sometimes went out of my way to pass by the mysterious house. One day I had just got up to it, when suddenly — wonderful to relate! — a bolt grated in the gates, a key creaked in the lock, then the gates themselves slowly parted, there appeared a large horse's head, with a plaited forelock under a decorated yoke, and slowly there rolled into the road a small cart, like those driven by horse-dealers, and higglers. On the leather cushion of the cart, near to me, sat a peasant of about thirty, of a remarkably handsome and attractive appearance, in a neat black smock, and a black cap, pulled down low on his forehead. He was carefully driving the well-fed horse, whose sides were as broad as a stove. Beside the peasant, on the far side of the cart, sat a tall woman, as straight as an arrow. Her head was covered by a costly-looking black shawl. She was dressed in a short jerkin of dove-coloured velvet, and a dark blue merino skirt; her white hands she held discreetly clasped on her bosom. The cart turned on the road to the left, and brought the woman within two paces of me; she turned her head a little, and I recognised Evlampia Harlov. I knew her at once, I did not doubt for one instant, and indeed no doubt was possible; eyes like hers, and above all that cut of the lips — haughty and sensual — I had never seen in any one else. Her face had grown longer and thinner, the skin was darker, here and there lines could be discerned; but, above all, the expression of the face was changed! It is difficult to do justice in words to the self-confidence, the sternness, the pride it had gained! Not simply the serenity of power — the satiety of power was visible in every feature. The careless glance she cast at me told of long years of habitually meeting nothing but reverent, unquestioning obedience. That woman clearly lived surrounded, not by worshippers, but by slaves. She had clearly forgotten even the time when any command, any desire of hers, was not carried out at the instant! I called her loudly by her name and her father's; she gave a faint start, looked at me a second time, not with alarm, but with contemptuous wrath, as

though asking — "Who dares to disturb me?" and barely parting her lips, uttered a word of command. The peasant sitting beside her started forward, with a wave of his arm struck the horse with the reins — the horse set off at a strong rapid trot, and the cart disappeared.

Since then I have not seen Evlampia again. In what way Martin Petrovitch's daughter came to be a Holy Virgin in the Flagellant sect I cannot imagine. But, who knows, very likely she has founded a sect which will be called — or even now is called — after her name, the Evlampieshtchin sect? Anything may be, anything may come to pass.

And so this is what I had to tell you of my *Lear of the Steppes*, of his family and his doings.

The story-teller ceased, and we talked a little longer, and then parted, each to his home.

MAXIM GORKY

A SKY-BLUE LIFE

KONSTANTIN MIRONOFF sat at his window staring into the street, trying not to think. The wind had finally swept the sky clean of clouds, and arranging in pretty festoons and ripples the dust along the unpaved thoroughfare, died down as though burying itself in the road. Sparrows came flying like bouncing balls, and gathered round a chicken's head and plucked at the feathers; a cat crawled from under the Rosanoffs' gate, watched the birds intently, took aim at one, but sprang a moment too late. She patted the tender morsel with her soft paw, then snatching it, shook it violently and deliberately, and sedately raising her tail, carried her booty off under the gate.

Ivan Ivanovitch Rosanoff came plodding along, chasing a fawn-colored goat before him with a stick. The church bells had just begun to ring. The man lifted his hat and revealed a bald skull resembling that of a holy martyr He glanced up with approval into the cool azure sky, while the goat, stopping in its turn, shook its beard and planted its hoofs deep in the dirt.

"All this," mused Mironoff, "would be quite impossible in Paris. One is not allowed to lead goats through the streets of Paris. And people don't throw dead chickens' heads out of their windows."

In the distance below, beyond the lead-colored strip of river, behind the dingy distillery buildings and the gray houses occupied by the local colony of lunatics, a swollen, orange-hued, rayless sun was sinking over the sandy hills, among the shaggy black junipers. Mironoff had witnessed the same phenomenon day in and day out for so long that it had become tiresome as the page of an often-read book. In order to divert his thoughts he imagined the pearl-tinted sky to be a huge map: there was Moscow, there Berlin, there Cologne, and — there ought to be Paris. This evening the sky was too crowded to show Paris, which was very irritating. It was important that Paris should be seen in the imaginary map, it should have a tangible position. It rose before him, a city of azure blue, filled with a solemn organ music, a city with happy inhabitants and wondrous adventures, where life was easy and simple, where even so wicked a fellow as Rocambole found it impossible to be wicked all the time. In Paris the monster Quasimodo himself was pleasantly fascinating. There lived the Three Musketeers, the mysterious Knight of the Hen-House, the fearless D'Artagnan ——

On the river bank two voices greeted the sinking sun with a song chanted in a languid drawl to the accompaniment of the brassy clang of church bells. All day long, since early morning, the dry wind had driven the dust in circling eddies, so that the song and the bells seemed to have combined to bring peace and relief, a sweet orderliness into the life of men.

And yet the blessed stillness of Saturday evening could not appease the troubled soul of Mironoff. It was torn asunder, entangled, perplexed; his memory suggested pictures of the past and overwhelmed him with a sense of the chaos of life. It was the first time he had felt any real mental disturbance. He must think, and the effort filled him with a strange fear. He left the window and inspected several times every corner of the room, as though hoping to find in the bluish dusk what it was that compelled him to meditate.

Queer: even when he closed his eyes, the darkness trembled: whirlwinds danced, arranging themselves in strange shapes, now in straight lines, now in circles, finally forming themselves into tall pillars of black dust. The darkness became palpable, effervescent, and then unaccountably forced him again to wonder, "How am I going to order my life?"

Thought! What did it mean? Not long before his father's death, his mother had said to her husband one day, "You ought to do a bit of thinking, you fool. You haven't long to live!" The good man had replied with a smile:

"Do you know what thinking means? It means wiping away the dust. See, you have a dusting rag in your hand. It was clean once, and now it is dirty. Both you and I, Lydia, have done a good deal of thinking, and . . ."

His mother, once a careful housekeeper who prided herself on her work, was very angry at this, and began to scream:

"You call me a dirty rag? D'you mean my house is dirty?"

Two weeks after, Mironoff had discovered his mother lying on the kitchen floor with one shoulder against the stove. Propping herself precariously on one arm, she emitted low groans and grunts. Thinking she was still drunk, Mironoff stooped to assist her, but she snatched her arm away, and fell heavily at his feet. For four days she continued to moan and kept brandishing her arm as though warding off something, and on the fifth fell out of bed, crept into a far corner of the room, and died. For a whole week strange persons fussed about the place from morning till night: the hunchbacked nursing-sister, the fat doctor who shouted orders and smoked incessantly, the yellow-bearded priest Boris who sat with his legs outstretched. Everyone asked Mironoff questions. Kallistrat the carpenter, whom everybody disliked, impertinently inquired of the boy:

"And now what are you going to do, you poor orphan?"

In Paris, dying and being buried are far simpler matters: the funeral arrangements are even interesting. Here they were unnecessary and dreadful. In Paris strange people didn't come to gloat over the body of the deceased. As for Kallistrat, in Paris he would never have been tolerated.

The day Mironoff's mother died, the carpenter took a pot of sour cream out into the street and dipping a brush into it began to paint his garden fence. Why? He was not drunk. He went through the performance with the utmost gravity. When someone inquired what he thought he was doing, he calmly replied, "I am painting the fence."

"With sour cream?"

"I couldn't find any paint." And for ten minutes he worked in silence, conscientiously daubing the gray boards discolored by the sun. A small group of youngsters and men watched him. The performance was suddenly ended when Ivan Ivanovitch Rosanoff came up and kicked the pot, smashing it to pieces.

The doctor, in examining the body, had said in his offensive manner: "If she had not drunk so hard, she would have been good for another forty years."

And Mironoff remembered that though at the time the words had sounded crude, he had made a swift calculation: if she had lived that long, *he* would have been fifty-nine, and she would doubtless have gone on shouting at him all her life: "You fool! You're just like your father." Large-eyed, rough, half-drunk from the moment she got up, she would have rolled from room to room, dusting, killing flies, and filling the atmosphere with the smell of pickled onions and soaked apples, her favorite dishes. And she would have abused his father. She always did that, especially on holidays when he would hang his topographer's uniform over his gaunt and lanky body and go to town for a game of billiards. He was good at billiards, as he was at all things. In word and deed he was an exceptional man. His long, lanky figure, his thin unkempt beard and strange straggly

little moustache, were vivid in his son's memory. He had a nasty habit of coughing and spitting. He used to tell the youthful Kostia marvelous tales about the Turks and General Skobeleff, the Caucasus, Khiva and Bukhara, his eyes alight with merriment. He was a carefree pilgrim, a wanderer over the face of the earth. Under his left eye was a red scar, the result of a wound (in the Turkish campaign) that wrinkled that side of his face: the eye itself seemed as though it were always peeping out at one. He never quarrelled with his wife, and seldom argued; instead, he would drive her to distraction by a sarcastic word, which made her bellow at him:

"You shut up, Mitka! God will punish you for your foolishness, you just wait and see!"

"God never punishes stupidity," he had answered, "God loves fools." These words had disturbed the lad. He remembered them often afterward. One day, when he was mending a violin, the father had taken from the instrument a short round little stick. "This thing," he said, "is called the soul. In you, too, Lydia, there is a little spindle like this, put in you by the devil."

"Liar!" she replied, "my soul comes from God!"

On her Name Day one year, her husband on returning from church had presented her with several yards of cashmere for a new dress. Wrapped up in it was a loathsome picture called *The Death of a Sinner:* at the feet of a dying man stood a green devil, sticking out a fiery tongue, his lip curled in a sneer. She had laughed at first, but thinking about it later and having drunk a good deal at dinner, she suddenly burst out crying and wailing: "My misery! My cross!" In her rare moments of repose she called her husband a conjurer because he had made a music box that could play *The Reel, Mother Dear* and the national anthem. One day, when drunk, she had smashed the music box, and trampled the bits under her feet. Kostia had later gathered up the fragments and hidden them in the garret, and had often begged his father to mend the instrument, the miraculous contraption that could play by itself gay, sad or solemn tunes, but his father had replied:

"What nonsense! It's only a box. Don't bother me." And with a sigh as he thoughtfully played with the boy's ear, he added: "If she would only burst, drink herself to death, I'd be able to do some fine things." He liked to make delicate mechanical instruments, accordions and violins, to repair picture frames and the like, and when he worked he always sang:

Seven sons, seven sons,
What shall we do with seven sons?

The most successful of his father's many contrivances was a globe. Kostia still had it: it was a present to him on graduating into his second term. Except for the lower half, it was an ordinary globe, but on this lower half (constructed out of a tin wash basin) he had burnt with acid, all the out-

lines of the oceans and hemispheres, continents and islands, skilfully coloring the various parts. The thing was held firmly in place by a steel comb, fixed with solder. The comb was so arranged that when the globe turned on its axis it would play a pretty tinkling tune: "Siskin, Siskin, where have you been?" Even his mother had liked this, and often turned the globe with childish joy, laughing her drunken laugh. But the cat had objected, and whenever the tune began, she would scamper away. When he was bored, Kostia used to annoy the cat by turning the globe.

Yes, his father was on the whole a cheerful man, but now whenever Kostia remembered his jokes, they failed to bring him either solace or joy. He was even distressed.

In the year of his death the old man had started on a pilgrimage to a monastery. Before leaving, he had fixed to all the doors of his flat little devices made out of rubber balls and sticks of wood, which shrieked piercingly whenever a door was opened or closed. This drove his wife to distraction.

"Are you making fun of me?" she shouted, struck her husband across the face, and proceeded to demolish all the alarms. He had smiled and walked off jauntily into the garden, lain down on the grass under the lime-tree, laughed, and fallen into a restless sleep. Mironoff recalled how strangely his father had talked in his delirious slumber. He had gone out and sat by his side. A wave of compassion swelled in his heart as he scrutinized the thin gray face. The dear, queer man! He was incomprehensible. In that hour a sorrowful shadow was cast over his love for his father. At the same time a feeling of mistrust was born in him. He had received at the time one of those ineffaceable impressions that determine the course of a man's life. The bees droned heavily in the thick foliage, so that nothing else could be heard. It was a sultry summer day. High overhead swam the deep blue sky, a symphony of serene beauty. The boy had watched it for a long while, until his eyes smarted. He was awakened from his dream by the distant song of what he guessed to be a lark. From that day he found that he had to think in terms of sound: sounds echoed every thought that came to him and burst into wordless song.

During the last two weeks he had been unable to stifle his thoughts by sounds. The dust of memory invaded his brain, the dull voice of his father echoed, and the everlasting wrangling of his mother. He learned from her as a boy that she had been married before, to her second husband's employer. The first husband had once tried to shoot his successor. "My misfortune," was her comment, "that he missed you!"

And now Kostia was conscious that something dark and dangerous had been hidden in the lives of his parents, something perhaps even criminal.

He was afraid to think of it, yet the thought persisted, until he became interested in books: from these he learned that there were other more interesting mysteries in the world. They had opened a vista of beauty before

him. He was bashful and awkward and had no friends. Since he was often subject to colds, he found ample time to read. It was during the long hours of reading that the miraculous city of Paris arose in a blue mist of faery magic out of the encumbering shadows.

His father had died in the spring-time. His mother behaved dreadfully: "There, Mitia, you see . . . I told you. . . ." The four years spent alone with the drunken woman had made him more introspective than ever. He found pleasure in fishing and long walks in the fields and woods, where he listened to the birds, the rustle of grass and leaves, and the stranger whisper of the wind. What he loved most was to hear the distant strains of the military band on holidays. He would stand and watch the soldiers as they drew near, puffing out their cheeks as they blew their horns and bugles, but after a time there was no fun even in this. He would then take with him on his excursions a French grammar, ponder it and try to remember what he had studied. But he had not a very good memory and the words became transmitted into groups of meaningless though utterly beautiful sounds, into a sort of mystic blue music.

It was on Easter Sunday that he was for the first time conscious of Lisa Rosanoff. She was dressed that morning in a blue dress. She had just come out of church; the bells were ringing and the sun blazing splendidly. Small, slim, dainty and lovely as a flower, she seemed to reflect the azure of the heavens over her. Living just across the street, Mironoff had often seen her, but hitherto the girl had seemed merely thin and peaked, her face with its round staring eyes and pouting (or was it just weary?) lips, had not appealed to him. He had once thought she was almost as unattractive as himself. He knew that the girl was taking goat's milk as a cure; the odor was decidedly disagreeable.

That Easter morning he was filled with joyful amazement: how had he failed to notice that Lisa was beautiful? From that day he had made her the companion of his sky-blue dreams. She was a straw to which he clung in the swirling current of life, a life that was fearful and unfathomable. He had not the courage to become acquainted with the girl, but every day on his way home from the office he lingered as he passed her house, and after dinner he would sit by the window looking out to see whether she might be anywhere visible. Sometimes she stepped out, and tripped lightly off toward the river, to join her father at the lumber yard. As she went down the street she clung close to the hedges, as though reserving the right to dart into a gateway if it became necessary to hide. A short braid of dark hair, tied with a sky-blue ribbon, dangled down her narrow little back. This girl had at least one thing in common with Mironoff: she evidently was afraid of people, and this brought her still closer to him. After he had watched her until she disappeared from view, he turned to the mirror and scrutinized, with a feeling of rebellion in his heart, his dark motionless eyes, set wide apart; in the left was a slight squint that made the eye appear to

be peeping at the protuberant waxen ear behind it; his upper lip, shadowed faintly with down, contrasted strikingly with his parchment-colored ill-formed nose; his hair was a mass of rebellious locks. It seemed that everything about him grew in the wrong direction; he was like a tree planted in barren soil. His arms were too long, his fingers too bony, his mouth too large, and his teeth so irregular that he was afraid to smile. It was not pleasant to look at the reflection in the glass. He had noticed that if one looks long enough, dark circles appear round the eyes and the reflection seems to fade. Now it seemed to him that he himself was fading at the same time.

Not long before his mother's death he had surprised himself by asking her: "Mother, why don't you ask Lisa's parents to allow me to marry her?" He had blushed and become frightened because he had unwittingly revealed his secret. But that day she had not been drinking, and had little to say. She had merely looked at him contemptuously and called him a fool. A fine husband he would make! And clenching her large swollen fingers she brandished her fist in the air, saying that a husband should behave like *that!* The more he thought about his mother the stranger and coarser did she seem: he could not forget her huge misshapen body, her large dull eyes. He wanted to wipe the dust from her shadow.

The blue dusk in the room had thickened. It was warm. Over beyond the river, the evening star shone brightly in the rose-tinted sky. A cart rumbled along the street, loaded with furniture — mattresses, flower-pots and the rest; under an artificial palm a girl reclined, dressed in a red blouse, a white shawl tied round her head. She was sitting on some bundles holding on her knees a cage with a blackbird in it. A few gaily colored toys fell from the cart and rolled in the dust. An old man, his head tilted forward and flourishing a whip, trod by the side of the heavy thick-legged horse.

"Well," he shouted to the girl, "who do you go to? Where shall we make our complaint?"

"The old fool!" thought Mironoff.

Artamon, the teamster from the lumber yard, thick-set and heavy as a bear, came down the street. His shaggy countenance was disfigured by a hare-lip, his mouth formed a triangle revealing in all their savagery a set of yellow teeth. With him was the tall and slender carpenter Kallistrat, bare-footed, wearing an apron smeared with paint and glue, a dark leather band round his fair curly hair. His golden whiskers made a brave show under his hawk-like nose. As he passed Mironoff's window he twisted the strands of his beard round his fingers and, looking sidewise at his companion, murmured: "Touchy chap!"

"Well, you better leave him alone," returned Artamon, "let him be touchy by himself!" And, passing on, they disappeared in a reddish cloud of dust. Everyone in the street was struck with admiration at the super-

human physique of the teamster; everyone feared him just as everyone feared the mischievous impudence of the carpenter.

Mironoff closed his eyes. It seemed as though that made him invisible to others.

Often he dreamed strange dreams after a sleepless night: once he dreamed he was on a broad road illuminated by bonfires, and along the road stretched an interminable file of marching coffee-pots, all the same size and all with long thin legs, looking like spiders. Again, a small hunch-backed monster paced the street, driving in nails so close to each other that the road looked like the scales of a monster. And again, a huge fish swam along the river swallowing the reflection of the moon, which sauntered gracefully among the rocks, swaying to and fro like a pendulum; the sky was weirdly black. The dreams troubled him, absurd as they were.

Finally rid of the presence of his mother, and with only the cook, who was quiet as a cat, he was still uneasy. He felt that everything about him was asking, "Well, what are you going to do now?"

Mironoff noticed that all the people in the street looked at him in precisely the same way as the inanimate objects in his own room, as if they expected something of him.

One Sunday, after sunset, he was seated on a barge in the river, fishing for perch. The barge was half-submerged, and almost surrounded by ice. In the distance he could hear the brass trumpets of the band. The slow ripple of the water and the strains of music soothed his troubled mind; warm waves of sound lifted him aloft, gently, soothingly. To his keen senses the river hummed a bass that nearly drowned out all other sounds. His ear was sensitive as his eye, and the subtle sound seemed to become visible. He was so intent upon listening that he was startled to see a boat draw up alongside, and hear a voice inquire:

"Are they biting?"

He started and drew his line out of the water. A perch wriggled on the hook.

"See! I've brought you luck! Got many?"

"Three — with this."

The newcomer was Lisa Rosanova, clad in a mauve-colored dress, her hair tied with a bow of sky-blue silk. She was sitting in the stern of the little boat, while her friend Claudia, a fat black-haired girl in a red blouse and a dark-blue skirt, was at the oars. Claudia lazily manœuvred these in order to prevent the boat from floating with the current. Lisa smiled. Mironoff tried to smile back at her, but remembering his teeth, pressed his lips tight together.

"Let's go on!" said Lisa after a moment, and Claudia sat back and dropping the oars deep into the water, pulled. One oar broke and the water splashed Mironoff's feet.

"Oh, excuse me!"

Lisa broke into a light tinkling laugh, while Mironoff dangled his wet feet in embarrassment. Stupid of me, he thought to himself as he shook the water from his clothes; anyone else would have been glad of this chance to talk with her, but I — Maybe they even splashed me on purpose, in order to strike up an acquaintance?

Meantime the boat floated down-stream with the current, the oar-locks screeching in mockery. Mironoff shook himself, emptied his pail, took up his rod and fish, and went home. All the way back he pitied himself. As he approached his house he noticed that the brown paint on the front, the green shutters and the gate posts was failing and here and there peeling off.

"That must be painted," he mused.

Early on the morning of the following Wednesday a bald little fellow with an aggressive and sarcastic manner, began to scrape the house, while his assistant, a snub-nosed youngster smeared with paint, helped him. The old man sang softly as he worked:

He went away without saying goodbye

The boy chimed in with his shrill treble:

And gave his love to another.

Mironoff, roused from sleep, lay in his warm bed and thought: "How silly. The old fellow's too old to sing about love, and the other is too young. Why the deuce do house painters always sing when they work?"

A few days later, the painter was instructed to tint the façade sky-blue, and when Ivan Ivanovitch Rosanoff came by he stopped in the middle of the street and exclaimed in a stern voice:

"What are you doing over there?"

"I'm doing what I'm ordered to do," replied the other.

"But why blue?"

"I've been told to paint it blue."

"It spoils the appearance of the whole street."

"What's it to me?"

"Stupid!"

"I'm not the stupid one."

Mironoff, who was watering the flowers on his window-sill, had overheard this conversation, and was deeply hurt. Why did sky-blue spoil the appearance of the street, and why was he stupid? Little chance of that man's allowing me to have his daughter! He quickly came out into the street, looked at the other houses, whose fronts were washed out and faded by sun and rain, and saw gray fences joining one with the other. A line of white willows, with dusky foliage, descended straight to the river in two long lines, like beggars, seven on one side, ten on the other. Among the seven stood the one-storied brick house belonging to Rosanoff, its four windows peering grimly into the street. Looking up at his own house,

he saw that the triangle under the gable was already painted. It shone pleasantly with an oily lustre, like soft silk. There stood Rosanoff, and just touching his cap with one forefinger, he turned to Mironoff, saying:

"It's unpractical, that color."

"But it's beautiful."

"And expensive."

"But it wears well."

"I'm not so sure of that."

"The painter says so."

"Painters are liars," said Rosanoff sternly and turned away, offering to the sun the broad expanse of his benevolent countenance and silvery beard. Mironoff had had no time to ask why all painters were liars. He went indoors, took a book from the shelf and sat down by the window. Rosanoff reappeared an instant later with a broom and began sweeping the litter from under his windows out into the middle of the street. The painter shouted, "Hey, what are you raising all that dust for? You'll spoil this paint." Without deigning to reply, Rosanoff went on sweeping. Mironoff knew well enough that it was done purposely. And that hurt. He got up, went into his garden and sat down under an aged apple-tree.

"No, he won't let me marry his daughter. Why did I have the house painted anyway?" He could still hear the painter and Rosanoff arguing. He knew he ought to go out and put an end to it, but he felt paralysed. People were always pestering each other —. He remained seated until supper time. That night it was stifling hot and he could not sleep. The moon was inconsiderately bright and the dogs kept up an incessant din. On the floor near his bed was a golden yellow square of light, over which the window bars cast clear shadows. Suddenly three other lines moved across the spot and then the outline of a man. It was as though a lamp-lighter had glided past in the sky, carrying a ladder on one shoulder. Mironoff heard a rustling sound, then words. He pushed back his blanket, sat up and watched the window. There was a ladder immediately outside. Evidently the painter had forgotten to take it down and someone was trying to steal it. Mironoff jumped out of bed, approached the window, and looked up: on the top of the ladder was a man: he could see the bare feet. He was rather startled, and very much surprised. He crept noiselessly out of the room, went downstairs and walked quickly into the street.

There, in full view, stood a man on the top of the ladder, dipping a short brush into a paint pot that hung from his belt, hurriedly daubing at the wall round the garret window.

"Who's that?" said Mironoff in an undertone. With uncanny swiftness the man almost slid down the ladder, paint spilling from the pot and streaming down the walls. A strong smell of tar permeated the tepid air. Snatching up his ladder, the man tried to run away, but Mironoff had

already recognised him. It was Kallistrat. Standing back a little, he looked up again and read what had been written under the gable. He saw large letters, sprawling and indistinct, spelling the words, THE HOUSE. Dark streams of tar softly trickled down from every letter, and occasionally he could hear a heavy thud as the large drops struck the ground below. The carpenter, holding his ladder on one shoulder, stood some distance away.

"Look here," began Mironoff, "what did you do that for?" The other made no answer.

"Incredible! Can't you mess around with anything but sour cream or tar?" Kallistrat laughed. There was something sinister in that laugh: it sounded like a cross between the cackling of a hen and the bark of a puppy. It was uncanny. Incomprehensible. The stifling air, the strange glint of the moonlight on the windows — queer — like a bad dream.

"You'd better not try to fight," said the carpenter, "or I'll give you a proper hiding."

"I have no intention of fighting," said Mironoff, moving toward his gate. Kallistrat, laying the ladder down against the fence, stepped toward Mironoff.

"Are you angry with me?" he asked. There was a new note in his voice: it reminded him of his father: he seemed to threaten and caress at the same time.

"No, I'm not angry, but . . . Why ruin things like that?" The carpenter now stood at his side and lightly struck him on the shoulder.

"Don't be offended, Mironoff. I'll make it right for you. The tar won't stick to oil, anyway. That's why it runs so. I didn't do it right. I ought to have mixed soot with paraffin——"

"But why?"

"For fun, don't you see? It was a queer idea your painting your house blue. No one does that, don't you see?" The carpenter bit his lower lip, jerked his head to one side and half closing his eyes looked interrogatively at the sky. He was evidently trying to think something out. He then pulled a wooden cigarette-case from his pocket, struck a match, lit his cigarette and threw the match up so cleverly that the fire continued to burn. With one hand on Mironoff's shoulder, he compelled him to sit down on a bench beside the gate and, himself sitting by his side, began to address him in a patronizing manner:

"Of course, I understand your intention; you want to seem different from other people. You think that because you are independent and have no family, you can do as you like, don't you? Do all sorts of queer things? But I advise you to stop, Mironoff: there are only two of us who can play that game, I and the Devil. You are still a nonentity, and so far as God's concerned——"

"What God?" inquired Mironoff sullenly.

"Same old God, my boy. There's only one. Have you forgotten? See here now: suppose your mother is dying — well, any human being, let's say. All the neighbors seem interested. They come buzzing about. Well, all I have to do is to start painting the fence with sour cream and they all hustle over to watch me. See?"

"No. I see nothing. It all sounds like rubbish to me."

"Well, you're no good if you don't see. And yet, you want to push forward. Let me tell you, you've got to be able to understand rubbish as well as anything else. Now, can you think up something like that sour cream idea of mine? There — you see! Now, I've been tested, tried for my pranks. Why, I once poured paraffin into a letter box, and threw in a lighted match. The letters were all burned up, and no one ever suspected I did it. It got into the papers. People wondered why anyone would set fire to letters. It was all foolishness, of course, youthful high spirits. Why, I used to lie awake nights thinking what I could do that was different. Even now I like to mystify people. They're so funny! They go along so quietly, and then all of a sudden something strange happens. They're upset, puzzled."

The carpenter twirled the ends of his moustache, passed the tip of his tongue over his lips, half-closed one eye and, looking up at the moon, said with a sigh:

"A beautiful star, but dogs don't care for it."

His eyes intent upon the sharp lines of the face of the carpenter and listening to every word he said, Mironoff wanted to do two things: to ask questions, and to say something insulting and leave the fellow. But what he said was:

"Maybe the dogs think it's a fox?"

"No one knows what dogs think," replied the carpenter with a grim smile, and went on talking as though he were preaching a sermon; but his words became more and more vague and incomprehensible. His boasting made a considerable impression on Mironoff, the words he uttered were like the words he read in the French grammar, dark and wonderful. Round him the moonlight flooded the thick foliage of the willows and touched his curly head with gold. His eyes looked green, mocking and sly, the pupils seemed to have been pricked with a needle. One could not trust a man with such eyes. The fellow was obviously making game of him.

"I think you're a lunatic!" The words came from Mironoff in spite of himself, and surprised him.

"Really?" asked the carpenter, laughing.

"What was it you were writing up there on the house?"

"I just began, but you interrupted me. What I wanted to write was 'The House of a Lunatic.' Why, everyone in the street would have roared

with laughter in the morning. See here, Mironoff," he continued, tapping the other on the knee, "suppose you let me have ten roubles?"

Mironoff drew away angrily.

"Now wait, don't be offended. I have a wonderful idea. I rather like you. The way you behaved just now: anyone else would have made a terrible fuss. Well, anyway, I want to do you a good turn." He had become serious, though Mironoff was now quite convinced that he was mad. That would account for his mischievous ways. He smiled to himself, for this notion comforted him, and looking into the sky listened to the soft words of Kallistrat:

"I'll buy paint and paint your house so that the whole town will positively gasp. I've been longing to do something of that kind."

"But why?"

The carpenter seemed not to have heard, and continued:

"I tell you, there's nothing I don't know how to do, but I hate to work. That's because what I can get is not to my taste. Now, *you* ——"

"Very well," agreed Mironoff, for he realized that Kallistrat would be up to some other prank if he refused him his way in this. But immediately the carpenter drew away and looked at Mironoff in amazement.

"Well! That's — Well, you'll not repent. I'll return in the morning." He turned and walked briskly away, then stopping as though he had stumbled, exclaimed to himself: "That's it! How they'll gasp!" Mironoff could see the black outline of the fellow clearly silhouetted against the silvery river. Then he turned a corner and disappeared. Mironoff stepped out into the middle of the street again, glanced up at his house and read the words "The House," then turned, went indoors and retired, thinking to himself:

"Yes, a lunatic, and probably a rascal into the bargain."

Early in the morning the cook came to say that the carpenter had arrived and wanted money. So it was not a dream. He gave the old woman the ten roubles and sank back into bed again. Ought he not to bring an action against the fellow?

This was not a bad idea: he kept thinking of it as he left the house on his way to the office and noticed the great black smudges. The tar had run down in places to the ground, so that the word House was hardly decipherable. He walked quickly down the street, uncomfortably conscious of the smiles of passers-by. Lisa, too, was doubtless laughing. — There are no wooden houses in Paris, though!

When he returned at five in the evening, he saw from a distance a group of youngsters by his gate, and a ladder propped against the front of the house. From the top of it hung a queer looking tin can. With one leg inside the garret window, the carpenter swayed to and fro. Shaking his cane, Mironoff quickened his pace and running up to the ladder, shouted at Kallistrat:

"See here. What the devil! I forbid you——"

The youngsters, who had greeted him at first with shrieks of excitement, were silent and drew away toward the fence. Mironoff was quivering with anger as he looked up at the wicked eyes of Kallistrat. He was ready to burst with anger and shame. The carpenter slid down the ladder with extraordinary agility, pushed Mironoff aside with his shoulder and pointed aloft with his brush.

"What are you shouting for? Don't you like it, eh?"

The frame of the garret window had been removed and on the wall to one side of it was a crude picture of a huge monster painted yellow and white, with red fins, but without a tail; the large protruding red eyes were surrounded with white circles. The thing was peering into the gaping window. Its snout was a cross between that of a fish and a sheep.

"There will be three of them," explained the carpenter, "one opposite and another on top. The window will be painted to look like a fish-trap." He was apparently drunk. His hand trembled, but Mironoff smelt no liquor on his breath. Maybe the paint was too strong? Kallistrat was smeared from head to toe. His gray eyes burned with a strange light.

"Well," he asked, "isn't it lovely?"

The youngsters had begun to jeer again. A beggar walked up to Mironoff, made a deep bow and extended a filthy hand. A shaggy dog was with him, its tongue hanging out and its head on one side critically regarding the scene, as though it, too, were perplexed by the brilliant fresco above. Amid the din Rosanoff's voice was heard:

"Is this going to be a side-show, eh?"

Mironoff turned quickly round, as Rosanoff continued: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, young man. You must put an end to this indecent behavior!" Mironoff felt weak. He did not understand. He turned to Kallistrat, and asked plaintively:

"Did you hear that?"

The carpenter showed his contempt by a gesture, as he answered:

"Everyone has a right to paint his house as he likes," and turned again toward the ladder. Mironoff held him back.

"Please don't go on. People will laugh."

"I'll see they don't laugh at me!"

"But after all, this is my house," urged Mironoff, who began to feel terrified.

"Tell them to go to the devil!" said the carpenter, now half-way up the ladder. "Oh, they'll gasp, you just see!"

Overwhelmed with dizziness, anger and shame, Mironoff went indoors and determined to lodge a complaint. He sat at his table, trying to think, and began to write. But the ink was thick, the pen was bad, and he found himself writing "dement" instead of "detriment." He threw away the pen and got up with the intention of going over to see Rosanoff and asking his

advice. He put on his Sunday clothes, brushed his hair, left the house cautiously in order to avoid Kallistrat, and crossed the street. But as he looked over his shoulder from Rosanoff's front yard he perceived that the carpenter had seen him and was now standing bolt upright on the ladder.

"He's only ruining the outside today," thought Mironoff, "but tomorrow he may set fire to it. What am I to do?"

"Well, what do you want?" asked Rosanoff with a growl as he stood on his porch smoothing his shaggy eyebrows. Taking off his cap, Mironoff hurriedly explained his errand. He was offended and at the same time ashamed. A ray of sunlight shone directly in his eyes, making him shift uneasily from one foot to the other. To make matters worse, his new suspenders squeaked. Rosanoff looked at him like a new priest in his pulpit preparing to begin his sermon. Was there something wrong about his appearance, he wondered? Why was he not asked to come indoors?

"I hardly see the purpose," began Rosanoff scornfully, "of your hiring that rascal over there. If he lived in the country, the people would have sent him to Siberia long ago. Justice slumbers. People are allowed to do just as they like."

Inside the house, through the window, Mironoff saw a familiar face. He was seized with the desire to say something important, striking, so he blurted out: "I think he's mad."

"Well, it's your own affair. Go on thinking. I have nothing more to say."

This was most embarrassing. With a deep bow, that made the suspenders squeak worse than before, he stole another glance at the window. Was it possible that Lisa had heard the squeak? Then she disappeared. How silly! He came out again into the street. Kallistrat had descended and stood there pulling his yellow beard, looking up in admiration at his work.

"No good," he stated, "it's all wrong."

"All wrong," echoed Mironoff.

"Too bad!" With a curse he went on to explain: "And I had such a wonderful idea. I wanted that fish — I like fish, but I ought to have stuck to flowers. I'm very good at that. Hares, too ——"

A ray of hope came to Mironoff, and he took Kallistrat by the arm and led him to the gate. "Look here," he said.

"What am I to look at? I'm ashamed of myself, Mironoff. Have you got some vodka? Good! Now I promise to paint it all over for you. Don't worry, old chap!"

The hope vanished. He called to Pavlovna through the kitchen window to bring vodka, and sat down on the bench, the carpenter squatting on a step below, his elbows resting on his knees, his fingers stuck in the great shock of hair. The cook brought out a bottle of vodka and a piece of meat-pie.

"Tell me, Mironoff," said Kallistrat, "have I really made a laughing-

stock of you? Here I've spent your money, and yet you are decent to me. You give me food and drink ——"

"I don't know," said Mironoff, who was busy thinking how he could dissuade Kallistrat from going on with the work.

The carpenter gulped down two glasses of vodka. "People," he said philosophically, "are either spiders — or fools. A kind man is always a bit of a fool."

This angered Mironoff, but he could think of nothing to say but what his father had once said: "God loves fools."

"You're right, you poor orphan. God is not without a certain craftiness. I've thought it all out. You're very fortunate to have found me. I'll be your friend for life. Why, you have caused my soul to blush for shame. It's your meekness that's done it —." His greenish gray eyes grew moist and his countenance became ecstatic. He pressed his fingers into the corners of his eyes, forcing out the tears. Though he was at first merely bored, Mironoff found that the genuine sentiment expressed by these tears was touching. The carpenter then wiped his fingers with his handkerchief, quite drenched in vodka, and looked up blinking strangely. Mironoff saw great beads of perspiration on the man's forehead and without realizing what he did, took his own handkerchief and wiped them off. It was now Kallistrat's turn for amazement.

"Why did you do that?" he asked, smiling.

"Perspiration."

The carpenter laughed softly, and stamped.

"Am I a baby that needs to have its face wiped?"

"I didn't think."

"No, you're a — well, never mind. I'll paint it over in the morning, don't worry."

"I beg you, don't do that."

"What!"

"No, no, don't."

The carpenter heaved a sigh, rose, and offered his hand. "Forgive me," he said, and sauntered away limping, as though one of his legs had suddenly gone lame. He stopped at the gate, peered back into the yard, turned again and carefully closing the gate, disappeared. Mironoff sat motionless. He was utterly perplexed. He tried, he wanted only to forget. Though the problem of the painting of the house had been quietly settled, he was not happy.

"What an impossible man!" he thought.

Late in the evening, Mironoff came out into the garden and lay in the grass under the apple-tree, looking at the sky through a network of leaves. Why was it that this stifling heaviness should come from that icy blue chalice of the heavens? The pale crescent moon was rapidly declining over the tip of the tree. The voices of men weary with labor and heat floated

to him from a distance. The sound annoyed him: he liked silence, unbroken, when he could feel his body borne aloft on the wings of thought, sweet harmonious thought, with no sound to interrupt. At such moments the earth and everything on it seemed to dissolve, floating off in slow waves and circles and disappearing utterly into space. He himself seemed to echo every sound in his disembodied spirit. Nothing was so marvelous as this loosening of the fleshly bonds, this mingling with the odors, as it were, of earth and stars, of the Supreme Being, infinitely tender, the source of intoxicating music. The idea of God on a golden throne, surrounded by Cherubim and Seraphim singing Hosannahs failed to satisfy him. The God worshipped in the temples of men, millions of whom daily invoked His name for help, was not his God. He vaguely suspected that this God had long since forsaken men, and a new God, a mocker, a clever scamp very much like the Devil, had taken his place. When he tried to visualize the maker of the music of the world, his virgin mind evoked the image of a nude woman emerging from a blue mist, that set him tingling with a tremulous desire; his heart beat faster and he felt as though he were rapidly falling to the earth from a great height: the symphony of sounds ceased and during this eerie flight he recalled all the young girls and women who had ever entered his life. This sensation he rarely experienced, but when it came it was unpleasant, fearful, shameful. He never consciously evoked the image of the woman of the starry heights.

On this particular evening he was unable to produce the sensation of levitation which had always been so easy. In spite of himself other ideas came to him, questions were asked him, demanding answers. *Had* Lisa heard the screech of his new suspenders? Her father was a disagreeable person who hated his fellow-beings, judging them with severity, interfering in their lives. Doubtless that was why he was universally respected. . . . How was one to live in order to keep others from interfering? The figure of the carpenter rose clearly before him, demanding explanations. How stupid! Mironoff closed his eyes in an effort to forget, made himself more comfortable and began to recite in an undertone the dialogue from a play he had just been reading:

"Oh, yes, in a way.

A bull can be pleasanter than an eagle.

Bull? You mean me?

Yes, sir, with your permission.

I am insulted.

Well, what of it?

I am insulted, I say.

It seems to me that Nature has insulted you, far more cruelly than I have.

Nature has made me a nobleman.

Then it is the nobility that is insulted."

"The yard is choked with weeds. It's been neglected!" It was the carpenter who had spoken. Kallistrat stood at Mironoff's side, wearing a loose shirt, the tail of which dangled round his trousers. He was barefoot, and by the look of his hair you would have thought he had just risen from bed. Mironoff raised himself on one elbow.

"How in the world did you ——?"

"I climbed over the fence. I really must tell Artamoshka to look after the garden and yard. He likes that kind of work. And we can let him play around here in the evenings." Kneeling before Mironoff, Kallistrat extended a hand to him, saying: "Here's what's left of the money. I paid six roubles for the paint and the two brushes. I'll give you them if you like. You may be able to use them."

"I don't want them," said Mironoff with a touch of annoyance.

"Well, neither do I," and the carpenter laid the money on the ground, sat down by Mironoff's side and looked him in the eyes.

"What are you thinking about?"

"Nothing."

"About girls, eh?"

"No."

"You must be careful with the girls," he pursued, picking a dry weed and scratching his forehead. "One of the bold kind will soon get the upper hand, and with the soft clinging variety you'd both soon be under water."

"I won't answer him," said Mironoff to himself, rocking to and fro on the grass, "then he'll go."

"I've been thinking a lot about you, Mironoff. You know, you've touched me, penetrated me through and through. Disturbed my peace of mind. What was that you were mumbling when I came, sorcery?"

"Oh, nothing: some poetry."

"I'm surprised, Mironoff."

"I don't want to surprise anyone."

"But you do." This was spoken almost as a threat. What could one say to such a man?

"It is very hot," ventured Mironoff.

"It is. But tell me what you are thinking of?"

"I don't like to think. I like everything to be quiet and restful." He tried to appear angry, but he felt guilty. "You see," he added, "how clear and quiet the sky is, but when the clouds —." He did not complete the sentence, conscious that though he was speaking in a loud voice the words had a plaintive sound. The carpenter, meantime, stealthily looking up into the heavens, remarked:

"The sky, Mironoff, is empty. That's why it's quiet."

"But what about the sun and moon and stars? Maybe there's something there we don't see?"

The carpenter shook his head dubiously. "I don't suppose you believe in God," he said, "you don't go to church."

Mironoff wanted to say something offensive, but could only mutter:

"My father did not believe in God."

"There are lots of people like that."

"He said that all thoughts and ideas served only to cast a shadow over everything."

"You don't say! He said that?"

"Yes, and now I can see for myself: thoughts are like worms. You dig them in the ground; they begin to squirm and wriggle ——"

The carpenter was now pulling up blades of grass, listening attentively.

"Come to think of it," he said, "there are really two souls in you: one that's wise, and one that mixes everything up. I don't want to think. The soul abhors thought."

"There you're wrong, Mironoff."

"But what is there to know?" He thought he might frighten the carpenter, perhaps even offend him, drive him away for good and all. "There is nothing we don't know: people are born, marry, have children, and die. There are fires, thefts, murders. Circuses. Church processions. Somebody's wife elopes. Drunken brawls. Sour cabbage cooking, cucumbers being salted. Gambling. My God, what is it all to me!"

"Well," asked the carpenter, "what do you want?"

"Quiet."

"Then you ought to have been born deaf. It's hard to make you out. Mironoff."

"I don't ask you to make me out." Was this offensive? he wondered, looking stealthily at the carpenter, who quietly gesticulated with his hands, watching the shadow that fell from the tree. Mironoff, with a sigh, extended his hands toward the rays from the moon. They both sat this way for some time, hands stretched out like blind beggars. It was the carpenter who first broke the silence:

"No, Mironoff, nothing you can say or do surprises me. Words can't, and as for your blue house, why that only makes me laugh."

"Confound you! Go to the devil! Why are you forcing yourself on me?"

But Kallistrat only smiled, shook his head and winked:

"Temper, eh?" And he smiled with infinite good-humor, readjusted the leather band on his forehead, lighted a cigarette, and slowly puffed the blue smoke into the still air. "I understand, Mironoff, you're bored. Your youth is to blame for that. You're not used to life yet. You must have pleasures. Girls are all very well in their way, but for a serious man, what they have to give doesn't endure. Indeed, there are very few sources of enjoyment anywhere." The dictatorial tone in which this was spoken again aroused Mironoff's ire: such things from an illiterate workingman!

"Everything must be changed!" he went on.

"In politics, you mean?" asked Mironoff.

"No. I have no interest in politics. I am aiming to create a work out of

my soul, something perfect, different from anything else, that will make people gasp."

"Why not bite the Governor's ear?" suggested Mironoff.

"What did you say?" asked the carpenter, blinking his eyes.

"Bite the Governor. In church, during the service. Everyone will gasp at that."

"Don't be angry," said Kallistrat, striking his knee with his hand. "You are an interesting chap, I do declare. A bit muddle-headed, but interesting. Everyone in this world is bored, and wants to do something to surprise himself and others, but the trouble is there's no opportunity. And people don't know how to go about it. Now, you'd better stop trying to think of it. Your mind doesn't work right. And you don't know how to explain yourself. Go to bed. He who sleeps, wants not."

Poking the butt of his cigarette in the soft earth, he jumped up, and without saying goodbye made his way to the fence, repeating in a tone of mockery, "He who sleeps, wants not."

Listening to the creaking of the fence as Kallistrat climbed over it, Mironoff kept thinking, "He won't come again — he's offended. That was an inspiration of mine, telling him to bite the Governor."

He pictured to himself the vast bald head and protuberant ears of His Excellency, emerging out of a cloud of blue incense at church; he saw the carpenter steal up cautiously and seize one crimson ear with his teeth. The congregation rises in consternation with one great gasp. The candles flicker as the rash carpenter is seized, dragged off, and given a thrashing ——

Mironoff burst out laughing, but suddenly stopped on hearing a noise over by the fence. It was probably Kallistrat, playing the spy on the other side. He rose, and pretending to cough, slipped into the house without once looking back.

Next morning, on stepping out into the street he discovered that the monster by the garret window had been painted over with a heavy coat of blue, but of so dark a shade as to make the windows look unnaturally heavy. The splotches of tar that had disfigured the façade were also all covered over, but here again the new paint had ruined the appearance of the house.

"So he has kept his word!" thought Mironoff, and wondered how it had been accomplished. It must have been hard. With a shake of the head, he went in to dinner. He had scarcely sat down when the front gate banged and the teamster Artamon, a scythe and a spade swung over one shoulder, rolled heavily into the yard, stopped on the porch, laid down his implements, crossed himself, spat on his hands, took up his scythe again and swung it as lightly as though it had been his whip. He descended into the yard and began cutting the grass and weeds. Mironoff rose hurriedly, and hiding behind the window, looked on.

"Why, they seem to think the place belongs to them!" he mused. He

could clearly discern the fierce-looking teeth of the teamster glistening in the triangle of his mouth; the crafty bear's eyes, almost invisible under his overarching forehead; the large nose nearly buried in the moustache, and the queer straggly beard. It seemed unnatural. Artamon had practically no face at all. He plodded on, as though cutting his way through an invisible though almost impenetrable thicket.

"So that's it. Kallistrat uses Artamon in order to make people gasp——"

It was not long before Artamon had cut all the high grass. He paused in a corner of the yard, held his scythe like a lance, looked up at the sky and crossed himself again. Mironoff took him a glass of vodka, a cutlet, and a loaf of bread, and thanked him.

"Thank you," repeated the teamster in an almost inarticulate murmur, threw back his head, tossed the vodka into his misshapen mouth, poked in half the loaf of bread together with the meat, glanced at what was left and then forced that in after the rest, swallowed it all and sat down.

"Now for the back garden," he said thickly.

"How much are you charging for this job?"

"Nothing. I'm doing it for the fun of it." And he trudged off.

Looking into the garden an hour later, Mironoff saw that all the grass had been mowed. Artamon was reclining under the apple-tree, stroking the roots with his hand. Catching sight of Mironoff, the teamster shouted,

"Hey there, you!"

Mironoff went out to him, but when he was some distance off, he stopped in alarm at the tone of Artamon's voice.

"You're a fine landlord! See that lichen! And all these caterpillars! These trunks should have been sprayed. These trees ought to have been dug out around the roots; they need fertilizer. You're a fine one, you are!"

As Mironoff approached, the teamster extended one hand, the fingers outstretched, covered with the slime of many dead caterpillars. Mironoff shuddered with disgust and drew back.

"What are you afraid of? Me? Why, I'm your friend. Kallistrat told me to come over. What are you shaking for? You're queer, you and the rest of 'em——"

He spoke very loud, and the disagreeable impression of his speech was intensified by his lisp, which was not unlike that of a young child.

"I'll make it right," he continued. "I like to work." He wiped his hand on one boot, groaning as he stooped. Mironoff regarded him with awe and, not knowing just what to say, timidly inquired:

"Where is the carpenter?"

"Oh, Kallistrat? Don't go near him. He's mad, the old rascal, because you didn't let him paint your house." Opening his mouth as far as he could, the teamster sighed three times. It sounded like the winter wind moaning in a chimney, and made Mironoff want to pull his head down between his shoulders like a turtle.

"You are stronger than he," he said.

"Of course I am. I was once in the circus. I wrestled. The dirty dogs broke my fingers, or I'd have had them all down. They beat me by cunning, not by strength." He turned and plunged his spade into the hard earth as though it were made of butter, turning over the dark sod about the roots of the apple-tree.

"Everybody's afraid of me here because I'm so strong. But I'm a quiet fellow, kind to everybody. I like to talk to people. Of course my voice scares them. . . . Last year my cart ran over a man — his leg it was. I was arrested. When I was tried the judge screamed at me: 'Don't shout so,' he said, but I couldn't help it. When he understood that, he acquitted me."

"Are you married?"

"Good God, is any woman fool enough to marry me? Look at my lip." Mironoff knew that the townspeople regarded all peasants with mingled hostility and contempt. Both his father and mother had inculcated that attitude in him from his earliest childhood. But as for Artamon he felt only fear and astonishment, and a vague sense of hope. If he made friends with this peasant, then the carpenter ——

"Working, is he?" the resounding voice of Kallistrat boomed from above. He was sitting on one of the fence posts, smoking a cigarette, his legs dangling, his head encircled by a wreath of blue smoke.

"Hang it all!" muttered Mironoff to himself, "is he going to start ragging me again?"

"Look here, Krinkoff," he began, straightening himself up to his full height, "now what do you want? I don't care to —." But he could not speak clearly. Something caught in his throat.

"What don't you care to — ?" inquired the carpenter.

"You'd better stop! I'll bring a complaint."

"Against me? What for?"

"The impassive attitude of the carpenter irritated him, and Mironoff stamped his foot as he shrieked:

"I don't care to have you digging and cutting my grass!"

Lightly as a bird, Kallistrat slid down from his position, seized Mironoff by the shoulder and giving him a gentle shake, spoke in impressive tones:

"Pull yourself together, d'you hear? Are you mad? Here you have people working for you for nothing. You ought to thank them."

Mironoff was ashamed of his sudden burst of temper. He felt as though he had been put in his place by the carpenter's hand. The teamster, standing to one side, opened his mouth wider than ever, and seemed to be waiting for something else to happen.

"I see," muttered Mironoff.

"You see, but nevertheless you yell."

"Of course, I'm very grateful ——"

"Well, you ought to be!" and the carpenter gave him a gentle push with his finger, and walked over to Artamon.

"Tie up those twigs, understand? And throw away those dead raspberry bushes."

"It's true," thought Mironoff, "they are working for nothing," and to show his gratitude he decided to invite them to a meal. Half an hour later the three of them were sitting at the kitchen table. The kettle was boiling on the stove, the vodka sparkled in the decanter, and on the table were plates of pickled mushrooms and sour cabbage. Artamon drank vodka and tea, very much as a calf sucks milk, and gobbled his food, grunting and snorting, while the carpenter extracted with his fork the tenderest mushrooms from the plate before him. lifted his glass with two fingers, and turning it to the light, wrinkling his nose and half closing his eyes, drank it down with a cluck. Every gesture was executed with the utmost ease and nimbleness. An unpleasant fellow, but withal very interesting. *Was* he quite right in his mind? Perhaps only an abnormally crafty man.

"If I like anyone I'll give him pleasure." he was saying, as he held his glass with two fingers and spread out the other three. "But I am forced to add, I don't care much for people. They're all fools."

"Ugh, you devil!" muttered Artamon, leaning back against the wall, his huge chest sticking out absurdly.

"Now, I'm a clever fellow," continued Kallistrat. "I'm capable, I can do anything because I know how. Simple things don't interest me ——"

"Devil!"

Mironoff drank two glasses of vodka, though he did not relish the liquor, and soon felt as though his brain were swimming in a fog. He listened in silence to the boastful words of the carpenter, feeling only an exasperating sensation of boredom. He was deeply offended. too, when Artamon fell asleep and began snorting, though he waked up a moment later with a guilty start. Kallistrat meantime twirled the ends of his golden moustache, and addressed himself to the teamster:

"Now, home you go! You've had your fill, you camel."

At which Artamon rose obediently and went away. Kallistrat expressed a wish to inspect the rest of the house, and his host, with the same obedient alacrity shown by the teamster, rose and led the way into his well-lighted bed-room. It had one window opening onto the garden and another over the street. Kallistrat went to the bed, poked the mattress and murmured.

"Soft bed, that!" Then, with a glance at the books on the shelf, he asked, "Do you read them?"

"Yes."

"All?"

"Yes."

Mironoff thought he could detect a touch of sarcasm in these questions,

and could hardly keep his temper. They next went into a small drawing-room which was filled with flowers and various little ornaments which his father had made. Kallistrat stood stock-still in the middle of the room, and after a silence turned to Mironoff:

"You ought to get married."

Everything in the room seemed to protest against the intrusion of this bare-footed visitor. The very planks of the floor creaked, the lamp-chimney tinkled, the Sunday plate, a present to Mironoff's mother from her friends, jingled on the sideboard. Mironoff was offended by Kallistrat's casual attitude toward the unusual objects that surrounded him. He was surprised at nothing. He neither noticed nor praised.

"He envies me, that's what it is, and he pretends he doesn't care, the devil!" The tinkle of the glass sounded more loudly as the carpenter examined the globe.

"This is a globe?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Common. Imitation of the earth. But why out of brass?"

"It plays a tune."

"Can't be," said Kallistrat. "Show me how it works." Mironoff opened the cupboard, set the globe on the table and turned the crank. Some of the tiny spurs had come off, but there were enough left to afford an idea of what it must have been able to do:

Siskin, Siskin,
Where have you been?

The carpenter drew away from the table and listened.

"That *Siskin?*" he inquired.

"Yes," said Mironoff, with a sad smile as he thought of the past. Finally Kallistrat stopped him, and taking him by one hand, with the fingers of the other he poked at the continents and oceans outlined on the globe. Then he sat down.

"Where did you get that?" he asked thoughtfully.

"My father made it."

"Why does it play *Siskin?*"

"That's a nursery song. I was just a child at the time."

"I see," answered the other, putting the end of his beard into his mouth and chewing it reflectively. At last, blowing it out as though he was extinguishing a candle, he rapped the Arctic Ocean and grimly smiled.

"It's amusing. Though I might add that *Siskin* is scarcely appropriate. The globe is a means of education, and to have that tune suddenly start up — you see? Was your father clever?"

"Yes. And very gay."

"Hm! Odd creatures —" He began again examining the globe, poking it with his varnish-stained fingers. "It's simple, and yet full of wisdom. A

drop of water, a few clods of earth, and we're told it hangs suspended in space. Remarkable. And millions of people are said to live on that ball, eh? Do you believe that, you poor orphan?"

"Why not? I'm living on it, and so are you," he replied wearily.

"Well," said Kallistrat, rising and offering his hand, "many thanks. Good-night." On his way out he paused in the kitchen, clutched his beard in one hand and said grimly: "The whole thing no bigger than your head, and yet — Very remarkable. But I must say *Siskin* is inappropriate. Your father did that just to make people gasp, see? Same as whistling in church. It ought to have been Hosannah, or some other church tune, or else a military march. Bum, bum, bum — like that." And humming a martial air, he departed.

"Go to the devil!" Mironoff not only thought, but actually said it. When he took up the globe to return it to the cupboard, he noticed that a part of North America was split, and had actually fallen down and become part of South America. That fool Kallistrat had done it! Wetting the tip of one finger, he repaired the damage, and turned the globe in order to hear the tune once again. Was Kallistrat right about the little song? But what *would* be more appropriate? All other tunes seemed quite as unsuitable:

> *On a rather dirty street*
> *Friend Ivan swayed along,*
> *Rather drunk he —*

Then there was his father's old favorite:

> *Seven sons, seven sons,*
> *What shall we do with seven sons?*

And what others besides?

> *I wish to tell you, tell you, tell you.*

Ah, that piece of North America had come loose again. How odd to watch the scrap of blue paper curl up like a shaving.

"I'll mend it tomorrow with glue. Why, I wonder, did he say it ought to play Hosannah? Surely he doesn't believe in God? Any more than I do."

His elbows on the table, his forehead almost touching the globe, Mironoff surrendered himself to the flood of thoughts that beset him, slow, vague, unfamiliar.

The street urchins had thrown mud at the blue façade of the house, drawn pictures with chalk, and written indecent remarks wherever they could find a place. On the topmost panel of the gate someone — evidently an adult — had written the following words in lead-pencil:

"This house stands upside down. A fool, lives here."

When Mironoff first saw this he was grievously offended, but noticing

that the last comma was misplaced, clearly showing the writer's ignorance of grammar, he was greatly relieved. Fool yourself!

There was no doubt that the entire street had demonstrated with unmistakable emphasis its hostility to the blue house, but Mironoff felt no irritation. He was much too deeply concerned by something more serious: the carpenter and the teamster had fastened themselves upon him and were not to be shaken loose. They were like shadows. Artamon called nearly every afternoon to sweep the yard, chop wood, work in the garden and growl, while the carpenter, behaving as though he were lord of the place, took it upon himself to introduce various improvements, and even made suggestions to Pavlovna about her housekeeping. The old woman listened to his words in silence, but as soon as he left, would quickly make the sign of the cross. Mironoff had often noticed this performance, and had only smiled at the woman's simplicity. His hatred for Kallistrat became intensified. That fellow was somehow destroying his dreams of a sky-blue life, raising before him a barrier of apprehension, and putting him, Mironoff, into the background. One day he summoned up all his courage to say to Kallistrat:

"This is all utter nonsense."

"You try and see if you can live without nonsense!" returned Kallistrat. Mironoff began to regard the intruder with feelings almost of fear. There was something abnormal about his agility. He remembered the day Kallistrat had hopped down from the garden wall like a bird. A presentiment of something out of the ordinary settled upon Mironoff's mind and oppressed him. He recalled the day when Kallistrat had made the floor creak and the glass tinkle. Why was it that every time he came in the same thing occurred? Mironoff did not believe in sorcery, but he had heard and read about persons who possessed mysterious powers, and could not escape the conviction that perhaps the very next day the carpenter would reveal his gifts in some terrible way.

It happened quite unexpectedly. On Sunday evening Kallistrat came in bringing a young girl with him. She was plump and had very fat legs. She wore a scarlet silk blouse. Her fine teeth glittered whenever she opened her mouth, which was small. Her cheeks glowed with a slightly purple flush. On one of the fingers of her left hand sparkled a pink stone set in a ring. Her eyes, it seemed to Mironoff, reflected the tint of the stone; they looked like the eyes of a white mouse.

"Her name is Serafina," said Kallistrat, pushing her toward Mironoff. "A fine girl."

She smiled. There was a queer disagreeable odor that emanated from her. When she sat down, her white skirt, tightly drawn over her large hips, slipped up, revealing a pair of round legs. She shuffled her shoes restlessly over the floor, and stamped with her heels. Her dark hair was brushed back smoothly, the braid hanging sleekly down the back of her

neck. In it she had stuck a large yellow comb, which made her look like a hen.

"How awfully hot!" she exclaimed, fanning her flushed face with her handkerchief.

The carpenter was dressed in a gray sail-cloth suit, an embroidered blue shirt, and highly polished boots, into the tops of which he had thrust his trousers. His beard and golden hair appeared to have undergone a thorough cleaning, and danced like tongues of flame. His dry, hawk-like face was graver and more restless than ever; his green eyes sparkled malignantly, seeming to see and understand everything.

"She is not capricious," he explained, "and she understands housekeeping. You can see for yourself she has plenty of flesh on her bones."

"How do you like it?" asked the girl, pouring tea into the glasses — "Strong?"

Mironoff sat opposite her, leaning over the table. His eyes twitched, his lips trembled. He wanted to pull out his tongue and wet his lips as he had seen the girl do when she ate jam. But he forced himself to smile in order to show the woman his ugly and uneven teeth. Her lips were very red and thick. He observed her sucking the cherry-stones until they were white. Such lips might suck all the blood out of a man. The carpenter's words "plenty of flesh on her bones," and her question "Strong?", made him blush. He thought of dogs, and purposely knocked his spoon against the edge of his glass, and spilled tea over his trousers. Jumping up unceremoniously, he hurried out to the porch. It was drizzling outside; the warm earth quickly absorbed the moisture, and the foliage glistened. High above, dove-colored clouds were condensing the unbearable heat.

"He wants me to marry that woman," thought Mironoff, as he caught a few drops of rain in one outstretched palm. The odor of the girl's perspiration was still in his nostrils. Though he was filled with repulsion, another sensation arose, not altogether unpleasant.

The carpenter appeared the next moment on the porch.

"Did you burn yourself?" he asked.

"Now listen," began Mironoff in a hurried undertone, "I don't want to marry, and I advise you to give up this scheme." He remembered his mother's words and repeated them now with delight: "What kind of a husband would I make? Why, you said the same thing yourself. Take her away! I'll give her twenty-five roubles, and you may have fifty, if you like. I mean it."

His knees shook, he would almost have knelt to Kallistrat, who stood there smiling mercilessly and twisting the end of his beard:

"You're quite mad, Mironoff, my boy. Why, you've got to get married. You've buried yourself in your books, you dream away your life. You have a rush of blood to the brain. You're positively livid. Your lips are trembling. Why? I'm telling you why. It's time you lived according to law

and custom. I'll supply the wife, and you and she will supply the children."

"I can't. I don't want to ——"

"Of course you can. It's time you stopped trying to astonish people. That's not your line. Other people will only fool you." The carpenter took him by the arm, raised him up and shaking the rain from his clothes, went on: "I know human nature. People will pretend to your face that they think you remarkable, that they are interested in you, but at the same moment they'll rob and deceive you. That happens all the time, I tell you."

His eyes tight shut, Mironoff saw a vision of street urchins defacing sky-blue houses with mud. They were his children, all of them. His wife, this "fine girl," sat at the window munching apples and eating pie.

He was now sitting opposite Serafina and it seemed to him that she had become plumper than ever; her breasts heaved, making the stiff silk of her blouse rustle; her small round mouth gaped wearily. In her sausage-like fingers she clutched tightly her white cambric handkerchief, wiping the perspiration from her forehead. Her pink eyes melted in a smile. Her perspiration, thought Mironoff, must be as thick and oily as molasses, and no doubt neither flies nor mosquitoes would have the courage to attack her india-rubber body. Meantime the carpenter poured cherry-juice into his tea and gulped down the strong dark beverage. Shamelessly, boastfully he declared:

"What I like most is to arrange marriages. I'm fond of noise and excitement. I like rows. I enjoy watching people standing on their heads. It's funny to see young people falling in love." He said this without the shadow of a smile. Stealing a look in his direction, Mironoff noticed that his face was twitching. At that moment it was terrible to look upon. It was fortunate the carpenter had not worn his leather band round his head today.

"You must learn to enjoy life, Mironoff. Move about freely, you know. Learn to commit sins, there's no great harm in that. Are you accountable to anybody? Who's your master, tell me?"

"I don't know." There was something terrible about that question.

"There. You see? If it weren't for the presence of this girl, I'd tell you soon enough who ought to be your master. But she knows what I mean, the rogue! Don't you, Fimka?"

"I know nothing at all," answered the "fine girl," trying to speak according to the rules of etiquette. Mironoff felt something touch his foot, and a moment later two feet encircle it and hold it fast. Pulling away, he jumped up, exclaiming:

"What are you doing?"

The girl flushed scarlet. Kallistrat poked Mironoff in the side, laughing loudly:

"She knows! The rogue, she knows!"

It was only afterward that Mironoff could recall what had happened. The carpenter left the room with a laugh, while the girl approached Mironoff, smiling:

"You naughty man, why did you make me blush like that before my uncle?" She seated herself at his side and inquired if he liked giblet soup, to which Mironoff answered that in Paris giblets were thrown to the dogs; in that marvelous city people disliked such filthy messes as soaked apples. There the inhabitants were noble-minded folk, who never dreamed of forcing their way into other people's houses. Suddenly an unsuspected force brought him to his feet, made him dizzy and hot. By the time the fit was over the girl had disappeared and the carpenter re-entered, seized him by the hand and inquired in a tone that sounded infinitely remote:

"You fool! Why do you push the girl around this way? How dare you? She is my niece, not yet your wife. And this broken plate? What's happened to you?"

Mironoff listened in amazement. Though Kallistrat stood close by his side his voice seemed to come from under the floor. Bits of broken cups crunched under the soles of his shoes; everything in the room swayed.

"You can't stand wine, I see. Don't drink it." Kallistrat offered him a glass of bluish-looking water, as Mironoff peered into his eyes. . . .

On awaking next morning he thought he had only dreamed of the "fine girl." He had actually dreamed of a fox, a large fawn-colored animal running round amid the stars, licking them. This had brought on a suffocating darkness that swallowed up the entire earth. Far off on the horizon one lone ray of light remained, but even there the stars were being wiped out by the lilac-colored priest Boris, who was swinging a censor bearing the following inscription: "To Let. Room for a Single Man."

This dream had terrified him, and immediately on waking up, Mironoff started to the kitchen for a drink of water, but on his way he stepped into something slimy on the floor. He returned to bed, tormented by thirst, and unable to sleep. Sitting up again, he saw that what he had stepped into was cherry jam. It was all over one foot and had stained the sheet. He looked at the floor and was sorrowfully convinced that the events of the night before were not a dream.

"Tomorrow," he said to himself with a sigh, "I'll sell the house and all my belongings, go to Paris and rent a room. For a single man. I must learn to speak French." And he took down his grammar, opening it at random, and read this question:

"*Que savez-vous sur Bernardin de St. Pierre?*" Between the pages he discovered a pressed butterfly, which plunged him once again into mournful meditations. Suppose, he wondered, when he arrived at Paris, the people would begin asking him about St. Bernardin? He knew nothing about that Saint. . . . And, closing the book, he thrust it under his pillow,

laughing at the sudden delightful idea that had just come to him: how wonderfully convenient and pleasant it was to know only the strictly necessary words, and none of the others! This gave one the privilege of not understanding other people, not having to think of all they said. This was just the way to assure one of a quiet and peaceful existence. Yes, exactly, he thought as he watched the pendulum on the clock trying in vain to sever two nosegays of blue flowers that hung near it on the wall. But why wait to sell the house? Why not sell it at once? Surely, the carpenter would not be allowed to enter the walls of Paris.

He laughed in old Pavlovna's face as she entered noiselessly, and strode past her from room to room, making a rough estimate of the value of the furniture. Seven hundred roubles, perhaps — or was it four hundred? No, that's not right. And, correcting himself aloud, "One thousand one hundred" he said finally. It was amusing to say that rather than "eleven hundred"; there were more zeros, and that was a comfort. "Zeros, zeros," he muttered, as Pavlovna followed him, sternly ordering him to come and drink his tea. He drank one glass at last. The tea tasted bitter, and he determined to go out into the fields beyond the river, to lie all day on the sand among the juniper bushes, returning to sleep at a hotel. "Try and find me there, you idiot!" he growled. But he changed his mind after all, took his fishing-rods and went down to the river. As he passed the gate he looked up at the windows of the Rosanoffs' house and saw Lisa, who was wiping the window-pane. He went up to her and speaking swiftly, he said: "I simply must talk to you about Paris. Meet me this evening at the cemetery."

Lisa drew back without answering, but this did not trouble him: he was convinced that the girl would come.

He did no fishing that day, only lay on the bank looking up at the sky. That aroused neither anxiety nor meditation. He fell asleep from time to time, passing the day thus until the sun, swelling and reddening as it always did at dusk, stood just above the roof of the principal building of the insane asylum.

Returning home, he ate supper, changed into his Sunday clothes, and began to think: "The carpenter will come and ask where I am going. I had better go into the garden." But once on the porch, he stopped and sat down on the steps. Kallistrat would see him in the garden. "I'm clever and perspicacious: that's why I dislike thinking." He could see in the neatly kept garden the slightly protruding stubble left from the cut burdocks, sticking up like pipes. He could even see a mouse in one clump. The night was warm and damp. Mironoff could imagine that the pipes were softly playing the familiar strains of a cradle song, so softly that not even the mouse was startled. Before him rose the vision of a slim girl dressed in light blue; he could hear her voice. It was unusually pleasant, and though he did not catch the meaning of her words, it made no difference;

in fact it was all the more pleasant. He would sell his house to this girl's father, who would allow him to marry her. He would take her to Paris with him, to live in that room for a single man. . . .

He sat there a long time and was brought back to reality only by the sound of a tumult in the street. Evidently someone was being pursued. A voice brutally rent the silence of the evening, crying,

"Run back! Hold him!"

Mironoff jumped to his feet just as the kitchen clock struck eight. "It's time!" he said, "it's time!" He strode to the gate, walked down the street swinging his cane, and made his way to the sandy hillocks where the brick quadrangle of the cemetery wall rose to meet him. He could still distinguish the brass on the cross above the chapel. The cemetery was comparatively new, and had as yet few graves. Over the grounds pines and puny birches struggled for existence in the poor soil, not yet sufficiently fertilized by the bodies of the dead. The grass was gray, and stretched as far as the horizon. Mironoff slowly walked along the stony path, beset with ants bearing pine-needles. He took aim at one and struck at it with his cane, but missed.

"Very well," he said smiling, "live on, if you want to."

Over the wall he could see the strip of road along which Lisa was to come. Beyond it houses and gardens ran down to the river's edge. The river itself, coiling in and out like a leaden snake, at one place visible, at another hidden by trees or houses. At the tiny toy-like persons Mironoff shook his cane.

"You'll stay where you are, all of you, while I go to Paris! I'm sick of you all!"

The factory chimney on the far side of the river spat out clouds of smoke, dimming the evening sky, still tinged with red on the far horizon. A dark cloud, flourishing a tail, threatened the rest of the sky.

"Boredom!" He recalled the carpenter's words.

At that moment he saw the carpenter approaching, twirling his beard in one hand, and holding the other under his apron. He was walking with measured steps as though pacing off ground along the road. Mironoff's heart sank as he thought, "He's spying on me. Here he is, the minute I think of him!" Kallistrat advanced some distance, then turned sharply into the field, toward two aged fir-trees, as though leading himself by the beard.

"You won't deceive me," said Mironoff, crouching behind the wall and watching the carpenter. He was really afraid, and crouched still lower next to the warm bricks, spreading out his hands as though he were being crucified. Thrusting his fists into the holes left in the top of the wall, he wriggled his thumbs in the direction of the carpenter, muttering, "you won't deceive me. . . ." But Kallistrat had turned off again toward the road, making strange gestures, perhaps counting on his fingers. He stood

facing the street, the same street where Lisa was due to appear. What would happen? Something terrible of course. Mironoff wanted to scream.

But Lisa did not come. The carpenter took the leather band from his head, shook his golden mane, put the band on again and walked slowly down the road.

"He'll hide somewhere and then follow us," thought Mironoff. By now he realised he could not avoid Kallistrat, who would inexorably pursue him and force him to marry that "fine girl." He would become his slave, exactly as Artamon had become. Pressing his forehead hard against the bricks, he suddenly remembered the carpenter's question, "Who's your master?" And he recalled the loathsome laughter with which this was uttered. Surely he already considered himself Mironoff's master. Mironoff realised the importance of that idea which the girl had driven from his consciousness by those fat restless legs of hers: "Who really is my master?" He shuddered. "He knows there is no one to protect me, he knows it." . . .

Down there, near where Kallistrat lay hidden, he could see dense clouds of smoke, so thick that it seemed one might almost walk on them. "I like noise and excitement," Kallistrat had said. What noise? Just noise and movement, and that is wicked and stupid, like the lives of all the people in this town. The carpenter liked wickedness, that much was clear. He thought of the other things that had been said, and pondering them, discovered deep meanings. "You can't astonish people." Astonishing people, making them gasp, simply meant doing things differently. To be normal one must think of nothing except the commonplace; only in that way can one be sure of living unmolested. Apparently life is impossible without interference from the carpenter. The cunning fellow has discovered that the man who lives alone and has no master must be made his slave.

"Ha, they all call on God, but it's the carpenter who bosses, ordering people about as though they were dogs."

Such reflections were unwelcome, and Mironoff was sure they were put into his head by the malicious influence of Kallistrat. He had never felt this way before he knew the carpenter.

Gray masses of clouds crawled lazily high above the cemetery, covering the sky with dirty splotches of gray. It reminded him of the days when his mother in one of her drunken fits would go about the house wiping with a dirty rag the window-panes, cupboards, and mirrors.

There was moisture in the air as the last rays of light disappeared over the sandy graves. Mironoff at last stood up, and looked toward the road, but it seemed to have been swallowed up in the earth. Walking quickly, though endeavoring not to make too much noise as he passed over the stony path, he trudged home. As he came near his gate he perceived that there were still lights in the Rosanoff house. He ran up to one window

and tapped lightly against it with his cane. The round face of Claudia appeared and without the least embarrassment, Mironoff asked her to warn her friend against the carpenter.

"What?" asked the girl in a frightened whisper.

"He is watching." Claudia closed the window. Mironoff thought he heard a cry of terror behind that window, followed by a peal of laughter. Peering cautiously around, he crossed the street and entered his own yard. Something small and dark rose from the steps. He drew back.

"Who is there?" he asked.

"Me," answered Pavlovna. "The carpenter has been asking for you."

"I'm not at home!" he said, and then in a whisper, "I'm never at home any more!" He went into his room and without lighting the lamp, undressed and went to bed. He could not sleep. He was bothered by the mosquitoes. His heart was heavy, for he felt that the carpenter was not far away, perhaps out there in the garden, hiding behind the window out on the roof, twisting his beard in one hand and deciding what torture to inflict on the morrow. Throwing back the covers he sat bolt upright, his bare feet on the floor, listening. Not a sound but the soft patter of a light rain on the roof. The heat was oppressive. A stray mosquito whined. He took his pillow and sat holding it on his knee, waiting.

"I must kill that mosquito." He rocked to and fro wearily, and at last fell asleep, still holding the pillow. He awoke with a start, sat up again and listened. The gray dusk of dawn gradually penetrated the room, creeping in through the dark motionless leaves of the flowers on the window-sill. His head whirled with a multitude of memories, but he sat there waiting, mystified, silent, immobile. The sun rose and painted liquid pearls on the moist window-pane. Dazed, Mironoff rolled over and fell into a deep sleep. It seemed that he was roused only a moment later by a strange screeching sound in the direction of the door.

A man dressed in yellow entered the room shrieking. He sat on the edge of the bed, took Mironoff's hand, and pulled a black watch out of his pocket. Looking at it, he asked in a high treble voice as though he were an old friend:

"Well, how do we feel?"

"No weevil at all," answered Mironoff crossly.

"Where are your pains?"

"What are your pains?" asked Mironoff in a tone of bitter sarcasm.

"How did you sleep?"

"I slept lying down." Mironoff burst into loud laughter, delighted with his own quick wit. He felt full of an unwonted energy, and very cheerful. He really liked this stocky little fellow, though he did reek of shoe-blacking. He resembled one of those funny toys that stand up when you knock them down. His face was puffy and looked as though it were made of rubber. His complexion was of a bluish tint, and his eyes a queer yellow

that swam listlessly like rayless stars on a wet night. Mironoff glanced toward the window: a bluish cloud glided swiftly along the ridge of the sky. The little man rubbed his blue chin with the palm of his hand as he asked, "Do you know me? I'm the assistant physician Isakoff."

A little embarrassed, Mironoff inquired what time it was.

"Half-past twelve."

"I'm hungry."

"That is very good," said the other, putting his watch back into his pocket. The room was flooded with sunlight, and the words spoken in it seemed to float here and there like rainbow-tinted bubbles. Mironoff pondered.

"If it were only always like that!"

"What?"

"Everything."

Deep in his heart he felt a happiness that lifted him above the earth. Bare-footed and with nothing on but his underclothes, he went into the kitchen to wash, but stopped at the door. He had caught sight of a shock of golden hair encircled by a leather band. Kallistrat was bent over the table, writing something with a pencil in a dirty note-book. Mironoff turned back noiselessly and sat down on his bed. All his new-found energy and happiness had vanished.

"What's the matter?" asked the doctor in his sing-song voice, and pressed his fingers to the patient's temples. Mironoff turned aside, shook his head and asked in a whisper:

"Did he bring you here?"

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"Where did he spend the night?"

"How should I know? People usually spend their nights at home."

"He's not a usual man."

"How so?"

Mironoff made no answer to this, nor to any of the other questions addressed to him by the assistant. He rocked to and fro, his hands clutching the edge of the bed, biting his lips and wondering desperately how he was to rid himself of the carpenter. The assistant passed into the kitchen, his shoes screeching as he walked, while Mironoff went to the window and began throwing the flower-pots out into the street. He had put one foot on the sill when he felt himself seized in an iron grip and held back by the shoulders. He knew who it was who held him, and submitted to the superior power, allowing himself to be led back to bed again, where he lay down without saying a word. Closing his eyes, he listened to the whispers of the other two, making out nothing but incomprehensible syllables that formed themselves into meaningless groups of sounds. The words were like gray shadows flitting about. He opened his eyes as the carpenter inquired:

"What's wrong with you, my boy? Sick?"

The green light in Kallistrat's eyes reminded Mironoff of something he had already experienced. It seemed years ago, when he was a boy.

"What are you staring at? Don't you know me?"

"He's trying to make me remember," thought Mironoff, and said aloud: "It seems I have seen you before . . . Yes, that's it . . ."

"A good dose of bromide is what he needs."

"They mean me," thought Mironoff. "They'll give me poison." He moved backward, sat up, crossed his legs, and leaning his head against the wall, stared into the corner, at the ceiling, and then with a cold shudder, riveted his eyes on a green spot on the wall. There he saw the picture called *The Death of a Sinner*. There was the green devil at one corner laughing. It all became crystal clear to him. That was the reason why the carpenter had ruined the sky-blue house; why he could swim through the air; why he liked noise and excitement. "Who is your master?" he asked himself triumphantly, because now he knew: Konstantin Mironoff does not believe in the ordinary God, the God of ordinary people . . . It was all clear now. But what was to be his next step? He felt hot and frightened. Without uncrossing his legs, he rolled over on one side.

"I want to sleep," he said.

"But what about eating?" asked the assistant.

"I'm going to sleep."

"Well, that's good for you, too."

The two went out, Kallistrat saying to the other: "Just like a baby."

He might deceive the doctor, but not Mironoff, who had at last made up his mind what to do. The first thing was to hide from the carpenter. After a few moments' reflection he got up, wrapped himself in a sheet, and looked at himself in the mirror. He was sorry he had no beard: that would have made him look more like Lazarus risen from the grave. He was terrified by what he saw in the mirror: something out of the depths was luring him on. He supported himself against the door, and muttered in a hoarse whisper: "I'm coming, I'm coming at once, My Lord," He peered through the door and saw that the kitchen was empty. A samovar stood on the table, shining in the clear sunlight. Little clouds of steam hovered over it. Mironoff went to it and turned the tap. He felt impelled to do that, but when he saw the clear jet of steaming water trickle down and melt away on the surface of the tray, he was afraid. He stopped and listened. Somewhere out in the yard he heard Pavlovna and the carpenter.

"No! Himself?"

"Himself" was of course God, the ordinary God. Why, Kallistrat had already divined what Mironoff was going to tell him.

"Know Him?" he heard the carpenter say, raising a threatening fist at the old woman. Scarcely touching the floor with his feet, Mironoff went into the antechamber and climbed the stairs to the garret, inhaling

deep breaths of hot and dusty air. Closing the door behind him he knelt down facing the semicircular window. He began to sing a Psalm to his God, crossing himself and bowing his head to the floor. He had forgotten the words, and stopped a moment to reflect. Rising and standing near the window he turned his face to the sky and said in a loud voice: "Forgive me, I was wrong . . . I believe. I pray——"

But the carpenter was nearer to him than God. He had heard the confession out in the garden, and cried out anxiously:

"Look out there at the garret window!"

Mironoff rushed back to the door, dragging to it everything he could find to use for a barricade; broken furniture, boxes, baskets, and boards. The moment he had made everything secure, he made the sign of the cross and murmured "God protect me!" Meanwhile the carpenter had run up-stairs and was now thumping on the garret door:

"Konstantin! See here! Listen to me, I tell you——"

"Afraid, are you?" shouted Mironoff and laughed, feeling himself secure, especially after he had made the sign of the cross.

"Konstantin, I'm your friend, am I not?"

"No!" shouted Mironoff, and seizing a loose brick from the chimney, flung it against the door. It struck one of the boxes. The resounding noise strengthened his resolution to defend himself against the carpenter. A moment after, the barricade began to dance as though animated by the carpenter's sorcery: chairs and boxes tumbled to the floor in a heap. Mironoff watched the frantic but vain efforts of his adversary. Finally, however, straining under the violent attacks from outside, the door swung on its hinges and fell in. The figure of Kallistrat, framed in the gaping doorway, frightened Mironoff for a moment, but he had sufficient presence of mind to seize another brick and throw it straight at the carpenter's beard. He saw Kallistrat throw his arms wildly in the air, heard him groan and fall backwards down the stairs with a mighty crash. Mironoff, overcome with ecstatic joy, leapt in the air and ran to the doorway, where he stood throwing everything he could lay hands on at the prostrate form of his vanquished enemy. He roared with laughter to hear the indistinct groans of the unfortunate carpenter, who was calling for the fire-brigade.

"Help! Water! He'll kill himself!"

Mironoff stopped for an instant and listened. Outside in the street he could hear the cries of boys and then the familiar base tones of Rosanoff saying, "It was you who made him go out of his mind."

"Yes," cried Mironoff, "it's he. Do you know who he is? Can you see? Ha!" He was suffocated with joy. At last he realised that everybody knew the carpenter for what he was. He was about to go downstairs when he was stopped short by the carpenter's voice:

"Don't hurt me, Artamon, do you hear?"

Did that mean that Artamon, too, had discovered the truth about him

and had finally thrown off the magic spell? But the teamster himself had meantime come up to the garret doorway, kicking aside the wreckage. Opening his ugly mouth and spreading his great fingers as usual, he advanced toward Mironoff with a growl:

"What's all the fuss about now?"

Of course, Kallistrat had instructed Artamon to deal with him as though he had been a horse.

"I'm not a horse," said Mironoff, as Artamon extended his arms toward him.

"Come now," said the teamster, coming ever closer. "Don't be afraid." Kallistrat now came in and together the two forced Mironoff into a corner. Making a desperate attempt to evade the carpenter, Mironoff threw himself on all fours and crawled toward Artamon, but the teamster seized him by the shoulders and picked him up, head downwards, grunting, "Caught him!"

Mironoff struck blindly and knocked his head against the dark wall. His body seemed to melt away in the darkness. Later the darkness slowly dissolved, and he realised that he was lying on something soft that swayed and floated. His arms and legs were broken, his head felt abnormally large and had become so heavy that he had not the strength to lift it. The words of the little song rang in his ears,

Seven sons, seven sons,
What shall we do with seven sons?

A light blue sky dazzled overhead, indistinct white figures floated in the soft light, urging him on: now two of them bent over him with quick nimble movements, making his broken body a little more comfortable. They rocked him and made him feel that he had no body at all, then carried him up, up into the blue canopy overhead. Mironoff realised that God had heard his prayer and thought that His angels were taking him from the earth. Yes, here was God Himself, tall, dressed in white, with golden spectacles, answering Mironoff's cry of gladness with a gentle nod. He floated past, caressing him with a cool breeze and the delicious odor of flowers. It was wonderful to see that this was not the ordinary God of old, the God of simple folk, but the true and wise Maker of the infinite harmonious stillness of things. The world was now quiet, and when the Maker of the Blue Stillness again appeared to him, he realised that with this God he could speak in the language of Paris:

"*Je vous remercie, Mon Dieu. Je vous remercie que vous* —" He could go no further in French and lapsed into Russian: "Forgive me, I really don't know the language yet. It's very difficult. I found it very hard. The other God, the ordinary God, had not the power to help me out. I don't like Him. I have always wanted to come to you, even from the first. Long ago."

"How long?" asked the Maker of the Blue Stillness, looking into his eyes through his gold-rimmed spectacles, and speaking with the tenderness of a loving father.

"*Toujours* — always. I'm not too late, am I?"

"Oh no," smiled the Maker. "Only, people are as a rule not in any hurry to come to me." It seemed to Mironoff that there was a touch of reproachful sadness in His voice.

"*Oui,*" he agreed, feeling that all his beautiful blue thoughts and words were slipping from him. He was uneasy with the fear that he would not have time to say all he wanted to say.

"No, they are in no hurry. They marry 'fine girls' like Serafina, damn them — *Pardon!* I beg your pardon! They live like dogs, you know, without shame. Then they have children, eat soaked apples so greedily! Well, as far as I'm concerned, I ask for nothing. The ordinary God pays no attention to those people, it's the carpenter who orders their poor lives. You know it was I who first discovered who the carpenter was. He is the demon of trifles, of noise and excitement, the Devil of Hustle. It was he who invented drunkenness, soaked apples, marriage, fish pies, gambling, everything that I dislike and don't want."

At the thought of the carpenter, Mironoff screamed with anger, but the Maker took him gently with one hand and turning over the leaves of his Book of Laws with the other, asked him, "Are you often subject to headaches?"

"Head? *La tête?*" He remembered the French word, and putting his hands up, felt his head. It was smooth and cold as a piece of marble.

"It is said to hang in the air." He recalled this phrase, as he pressed his head, then he began singing plaintively

Siskin, Siskin,
Where have you been?

"Did you add much to it?" I inquired of Dr. Alexander Alexin after he had told me the story of this man's case.

"You, of course, would have added more," he answered with a smile. "The story was told me by a colleague who was treating Mironoff's arm. Mironoff threw himself out of the window when he caught sight of the carpenter who had come to visit at the hospital.

A few days ago I met Mironoff again. He had come to consult me — slight touch of bronchitis. We remembered each other. He's not a man you'd easily forget. I think he's something of a knave, though he pulls a long face at the world. He owns the Book-bindery on the Morskaia. . . .

Konstantin Dmitrievitch Mironoff peered at the bottom of his glass where he had discovered a still undissolved piece of sugar. Carefully scrap-

ing it out with his spoon, he put it into his mouth, now surrounded with bristly whiskers, and sighed deeply.

"Yes," he said, "that's a fine case of unbalanced mentality! Well, shall we get down to business now?"

And picking up a pencil with his long skinny fingers, he began figuring on a scrap of paper.

"Considering that you have been recommended by the highly esteemed Dr. Alexin, and that you are in the same line of business as I am, well — I shall charge you — for the leather and cloth — Is that too much?"

"Not at all. It's no more than it's worth."

He explained to me in detail all about prices, the whims of his women customers, the taxes and various other things, to convince me of his disinterested and reasonable services. As he spoke, he stroked his bumpy skull with the palm of his hand. His long ears stuck out like the handles of a travelling-bag. His large nose nestled in the wiry hairs of his well-trimmed moustache. His cheek-bones moved strangely, and he spoke in a dull and colorless monotone. It seemed that he was chewing or sucking his words. The room was small and stuffy, and filled with the scent of leather, glue, and machine oil.

"Tell me," I asked, "how were you conscious that reason was returning to your brain?"

"You see," he answered almost reluctantly, "I'd almost forgotten all about it until the Doctor reminded me. It's really not very interesting and I'm somewhat ashamed. Other people go crazy in a decent or even a clever way: they imagine they are kings, for instance, or animals, something either very grand or at least funny. In my case it was downright foolishness, stupidity. There was an engineer at the asylum who thought he was a chess-knight. He was always jumping either to the right or the left of the door, and could never go through it. When the Doctor told me I thought he was God, I was really very grieved. A decent fellow, that Doctor."

"How about the carpenter?"

"Oh, he died. Not long ago — four years. I've lived here nine. I have to, because of my weak chest. The carpenter drank himself to death. While I was ill (for eleven months, that was) I had to bring him into court. He took it upon himself to look after my property, and made such a mess of it! He, too, was insane, like the poets and writers over there . . ."

He pointed in the direction of a book he was then repairing. Then coughing and passing his hand over his throat, "Yes, yes," he continued, "I read books when I have time. Usually before going to sleep. No, books have no effect on me. Writers have nothing interesting to write about nowadays. All about love — as though people needed that! Yes, a knowledge of French is very useful: I bind many French books. — Well, then, we're agreed: thirteen volumes in full leather. The Bible will cost you more,

though, it's a fat volume. — Tell me, why are you so interested in the carpenter?" he asked, slightly offended, and continued in his drowsy manner:

"He was an ordinary man, who deserved his fate. He had made up his mind that I should marry his niece, and then he made a mess of everything. He looked on my property as his own, but I can truly say I had him in a corner, as I did my father-in-law Rosanoff, whom he owed a great deal to, for timber."

As I listened to the reluctant tale, I was seized with a mad desire to drive Mironoff crazy again. But I listened as he brought the story to a close:

"Lisaveta Ivanovna died after giving birth to a baby girl. The child was still-born. I married again. Yes, thank you, I'm happy and peaceful. Her mother is a Greek, but she turned out quite respectable. To tell you the truth, it wasn't so peaceful with the first: she was subject to whims and tears. A difficult character. And pious, you have no idea! It was ridiculous, if you don't mind my saying so. Crosses and ikons all about her, and talking of nothing but miracles. She feared death."

He coughed, wrinkled up his forehead and added in a didactic tone: "As though there was anything to be afraid of! One should remember the Cossack proverb, 'While I am here, there is no death, and when death comes, I will not be here.' Very true. And you might add, 'You will not die before your death.'"

He smiled a grim smile, showing a neat row of false teeth.

"On my Name Day, Lisaveta Ivanovna gave me a ring representing a skull. Can you imagine? I loathe human bones. She was quite fantastic, and a bit mad. After she died I had to bring suit against her father on account of the dowry. He was a very highly respected citizen, but too greedy. . . . Shall we finish our business? — *Don Quixote* in two volumes. Leather? Don't try to make me reduce any price.

"Remember, you might be able to make some use of my story."

"Are you reckoning that in the bill?"

"Why not?" he asked, not without surprise. "Everything should be reckoned in this world. We must be careful: he who is careful is favored by the Goddess of Fortune . . ."

"No," I reflected, "nothing can possibly drive him mad again." Aloud I asked him, "Have you still your globe?"

Stroking the back of his head and glancing at the scrap of paper before him, he grudgingly answered:

"The carpenter started to mend it once, but all he did was to smash the musical cylinder. . . ."

Poland

INTRODUCTION

IT IS possible to trace the first impulses toward literature in Poland to a time somewhat before the Fourteenth Century, for the first Polish texts date from that epoch. Yet it can scarcely be said to have assumed any considerable importance until the Sixteenth. It declined to a certain extent during the Seventeenth Century, and became extinct in the Eighteenth.

The period of its glory was during the first half of the Nineteenth Century. Following upon the work of the great romantic poets Mickiewicz, Slowacki, and Krasinski, came the prose writers Kraszewski, Mme. Orzeszko, Glowacki ("Prus"), and Sienkiewicz; and a little later, Sieroszewski, Szymanski, Zeromski, and Reymont. Though the modern Poles have excelled in the novel form, most of the modern Polish fiction writers have tried a hand at the writing of short stories and short novels. This is especially true of Sienkiewicz and Reymont.

WLADYSLAW STANISLAW REYMONT

(1868–1925)

Born in a small village of Russian Poland, Reymont spent a large part of his youth as a travelling actor and a subordinate railway official. His earlier novels depicted the seamy side of the existence of actors and petty railroad employees. But his most characteristic work is to be found in his tales of Polish peasant life, of which the epic novel, *The Peasants*, is the greatest and best-known.

Tomek Baran (1897) is a typical work, revealing as it does the writer's understanding of the people he knows best.

This story appears here for the first time in an English translation. It was especially translated by Professor George R. Noyes, and is used by permission of the author's wife, his representative, and the translator.

TOMEK BARAN

When Tomek opened the tavern door steam gushed forth from the room as from a cow shed, and a flood of air so close and stifling as to be fairly sticky enveloped him. But without heeding this Tomek went in and pushed his way through a throng packed tight as grain on a threshing floor, up to the wooden grating behind which stood the bar.

"Give me a dram of good strong stuff."

"Want it in tin?"

"No, glass."

The mistress of the tavern measured it out to him. He paid his money, took his bottle and his glass and went to the other side of the room, to the second table. He sat down close to the wall, poured his liquor into the glass and drank it down. He squirted saliva through his teeth, wiped his lips with his sleeve, and became buried in thought. Some inward anguish was consuming him, for he could not sit still. He kept spitting, he beat the table with his fist; sometimes he rose as if he wished to flee, then again he settled back on the bench with a quiet groan and rubbed his eyes with his hand, for tears kept trickling down his dry, bluish, furrowed cheeks, scorching him like fire. He was almost unconscious what was going on around him. Some grievous suffering lay on his heart like a stone, for he was evidently beside himself. His shoulders drooped with constantly increasing despair; he sighed more and more frequently and kept scratching his head.

But the tavern fairly shook with the boisterous, rhythmic dance. A score of pairs, crowded close together in the scanty space allowed them, were circling about with stamping of feet and shouting.

"Hop! hop! hop!" rang forth the loud cry.

Every brow was moist, from liquor and the intoxication of the dance, yet the wild shouts of encouragement so spurred on the dancers that they stamped with ever increasing fury and circled about more and more swiftly.

The women's red skirts made gay patches amid the men's white coats, like poppies in a field of ripening rye. Through the little frosted windows of the tavern the dying day poured in streaks of ruddy light, and the crude lamp that glimmered above the hearth continually rocked and quivered as though it were keeping time with the dance.

A dull clamor arose, a sort of confused and indistinct rumble, from which crisp cries of "Hop! hop! hop!" now and then flew forth like flashes of lightning — and again for a moment all was drowned in an overpowering hubbub. For at the tables, in the corners, close to the bar, wherever there was room, peasants were standing about and chatting: of last season's potatoes, of the parish priest, of their children, of their cattle, of everything that was "on their chests," whereof it is always easier to speak in company, since there one can find a sympathetic ear. For just as an ox by itself will not drink from a spring, but in company with others will drink and snort for joy, even so it is not good that man should live alone, or enjoy himself in the tavern alone, or ride alone to the forest, but, as God has ordained, always with other men, with his comrades.

All were talking at once, were drinking one another's health, and embracing with hearty affection, and the mellow feeling given by liquor made all eyes sparkle and evoked ever louder shouts of "Hop! hop! hop!"

The planks of the floor creaked more and more heavily under the heavy stamping of heels, and the bass viols, which were set high up, on cabbage barrels, sang louder and louder: "Bom, tsik, tsik! Bom, tsik, tsik!"

And the little fiddles of linden wood replied to them: "Tuli, tuli, tuli, tuli, tulitee, tulitee!"

Joy was riotous and unconfined. Faces were close to faces, breasts to breasts, shoulders to shoulders, and all was so thoroughly penetrated with the rhythm of the lively music that the dance proceeded in wild, dashing, peasant fashion, till knots flew forth from the floor, the window panes moaned pitifully, and the big-bellied glasses on the bar fairly leapt with delight.

Now and then the tavern keeper would seize a tambourine, shake it powerfully, as a peasant shakes a Jew by his topknot, and smite it with his fist in time to the music of the fiddles.

"Dizh, dizh, dizh!" There was a confused, overpowering, deafening roar, and the trampling became more riotous and the shouts hoarser than ever; the lamp swayed and scattered flakes of soot on the fluttering coats

The steam from the snow melting on the boots and near the door, the smoke of cigarettes, and the darkness that reigned in the huge room veiled the dancers, so that there was a mere twinkling of red faces, of indistinctly outlined forms, and of bright colors in that furiously seething whirlpool of human beings.

"Who will help me, help me, help me, ha, ha, ha; ee, ee, ee!" tittered the fiddles gaily.

"I will, I will, ho, ho, ho!" answered the bass viols with a sort of convulsive effort; and all together they began to laugh and to jabber and to permeate everyone with hilarious laughter, till the tavern seemed to shake with a flood of drunken jollity.

One old woman — she went mad;
Another mad as well:
The devil stole away a third
And carried her off to hell.

When some one sang this stanza it was the signal for others to continue the song with ever-increasing gayety.

Tomek alone kept his seat, buried in thought. He poured out another glass, but an excited dancer tipped it over for him. So Tomek spitefully kicked the fellow's partner, and, since it was cold near the window and since he had grown tired of sitting alone, he got up and went behind the bar into the smaller room.

This too was full of peasants, who were clutching bottles in their hands, kissing, gossiping, and drinking one another's healths; the women modestly shielded themselves with their aprons and delightedly smacked their lips over their spirits. Good, honest, Catholic treating was in full swing: if a man owed another a drink of arrack, he set it up; if it was spirits with anise, he set it up; if it went as high as pure spirits, he set it up; or if it was only beer, he set it up.

He set it up with a good heart and a good will.

Everybody was already drunk, but what of that? A goat can die but once, liquor is not hell, and once in an age a poor man needs some comfort for his sinful soul and at least a drop to drown his sorrow.

"'Oh, you cur!' stuttered a drunken peasant to the fireplace; 'is that your kind? Just wait!' And I hit him so, and he hit me so, and I takes him by the collar, and he gives me one in the snout! 'Is that your kind, you cur? A Christian you are!' And he gives me one in the mug! . . . 'Bartek had beaten a lot of men and he'll beat you too; he'll beat you, you cur; he'll beat you!' And I hit him so, and he hit me so, and I says to him politely: 'Brother!' And he gives me one in the snout, and I says to him; 'Friend!' And he gives me one in the snout, and then I says to him: 'Is that your kind? A Christian you are!'"

He muttered more and more indistinctly and beat the fireplace with his

fist till the room echoed, and he continued his babble more and more sleepily.

> *"We've come for water to the lake;*
> *So here's a kiss, and many!*
> *I'll give you all that you will take,*
> *Because I love my honey!"*

So sang Karlina, who had buried her husband at last harvest time and who was now living in lonely widowhood on a dozen acres of wheat land, with a horse, some cows, and some decent rags left her by the deceased. She addressed a young lad who was standing by the wall. Once more she sang to him:

> *Wojtek, Wojtek my darling,*
> *Sit no more by the stove!*
> *Run, run quick to the widow,*
> *For she'll give you her bread and her love.*

"To your health, Wojtek, my darling boy! What a silly fellow you are to be afraid of your old folks! I told you that I'd settle the farm on you, and I will. Isn't it mine to give?

> *"Good things shall you have, for I love you:*
> *Cheese shall you eat for your supper*
> *And a tender chick for your breakfast.*

"Pay your respects to the holy father and give him something to publish the bans. We'll kill a hog, bake some cakes, buy some spirits, and have a marriage that'll make folks stare!"

"Bah, silly old witch! She has no teeth and she wants to chew crusts!" somebody spoke up from near by.

"Hey hey, turn your lamps somewhere else than on people's teeth. Look at the fellow, the damned scoundrel!" exclaimed Karlina wrathfully.

"Go slow, old woman; I've something to tell you."

"Tell it to the dogs. The tramp has put on an overcoat and thinks he's lord of the manor.— But even if you begged through the village and barked like a dog, I wouldn't pour any whiskey down your throat."

She turned back to Wojtek, drew him into the corner, and continued her persuasions. But near by at a little table two peasants were seated, drinking from a big-bellied bottle. One was silently scratching his head, but the other was waving his arms and chattering:

"Just notice what Czerwiński is telling you! Troubles settled down on me like women on a Jew's horse, and I didn't care! My wife and baby were wasting away — never mind! My horses were stolen — never mind, I just waited! My Jendrek caught the small pox — what to hell! Just as soon as I drank some brandy with grease in it, just as soon as I gave his Reverence money for a holy mass — it all cleared up in a moment! Just

do the same thing, Grzela, and you will see that it will help you. Czerwiński is telling you, and you can trust Czerwiński."

"I have as many children as sparrows on a plowed field, my wife is ill once more, I have to pay my taxes, my potatoes have frozen, troubles fairly shout in my face — and on top of it all my pigsty has broken down. Lord! Lord! Do drink my health! I don't think I can manage it; I keep thinking things over this way and that way and I can't find a way out."

"You're silly, Grzela; here's to you! You'd better stand a blow on the snout from the foreman and not mind it, for you can't do anything about it; you may feel his fist now and then, but you'll have work on the railroad and money in your pocket. Just take notice, Czerwiński is telling you this! And you can trust Czerwiński! His Reverence said that there were only two good heads in the parish: one was his and the other was Czerwiński's! God grant him good health; he's a wise gentleman and a learned. Here's to you, Grzela!"

"Pani Jackowa, Pani Jackowa: a bottle of essence, a quart of spirits, two pans of buns and a pound of sausage!" Such was the call from a table near the window, at which four persons were seated, two dressed in city style and two in peasant garb.

"Pani Jackowa, Pani Jackowa, some vinegar for the sausage, and a plate for the Forester! Listen, Mr. Forester, I'll tell you how it was —"

"Hush up, old man, I'll tell it more exactly, for you don't remember," his wife interrupted him. "I was walking along the road through the woods, walking just like this."

"Shut your mouth — she'll just wag her tongue and say nothing. I'll tell the story. To your health, sir!"

"Thank you!"

"Sweet and strong, Mr. Forester; let's have another!"

"To your health, Andrzej!"

"Pani Jackowa, another of the same sort!"

"Thank you, Andrzej, but I can't drink any more."

"My dearest sir, one more glass, just a drop, just a spoonful! I'll tell you right away how it happened. My wife says: 'I was walking along the road through the woods,' she says, 'across the Forester's section. And there,' she says, 'something was lying that looked like a rabbit but wasn't a rabbit. It hadn't a tail,' she says, 'so it wasn't a calf; and it wasn't a pig, for it didn't squeal.' The woman stopped short and was so stiff with fright that all she could do was to say, 'Lord help us!' But the beast just lay still and opened its mouth, and it had claws, she says, as long as your finger. And because women are always rash and passionate, whether they do evil or do good, so, she says, she just whips off her shoe and whacks the brute between the eyes, and then takes and runs home bawling. She flew into the cottage and says, 'Old man!' 'Well?' says I.

'I've killed some beast on the wood road,' she says. I didn't answer, for I thought she was just daft with walking, and was talking rubbish as women usually do. But she kept to her story: 'I've killed a beast or something or other on the wood road,' she says. I banged her over the shoulders to make her stop chattering, but she started in again. 'I've killed a beast on the wood road, I swear I have!' she says. 'I can't manage the woman,' I thought to myself; 'maybe she's really killed a man or something.' So I hitched up the grey nag and went to see — and that was when you found me in the woods, Mr. Forester."

"Andrzej, don't lie like a gipsy! I caught you when you were just loading the roe on your wagon."

"Just another drop of whiskey, Mr. Forester, for the journey! I have told you the truth as I would at confession, to his Reverence. Mr. Forester, you are more to me than a father or a brother, for you are my beloved friend and benefactor. I know that if you say the word, Mr. Forester, I shall lose my case in court, for such is the way of the world, that a gentleman is always on top, and we poor peasants just have to suffer and toil and weep! I know, Mr. Forester, that you are an honest man, and kind and just, and will not do me any wrong, and that I love you like my own brother.— My wife will bring round a pig tomorrow, as a friendly offering, and so we'll fix it up. Why should we give good money to the courts! Pani Jackowa, one more of the same sort!"

"I'll bring some ducks too, and a comb of honey, for I know that you are a noble and high-bred lady, madam, and that you were educated in schools, just as was your husband the Forester; and that you are not poor peasant folk, like us, for instance," added the woman slyly, bending over the knees of the Forester's wife. The latter threw her arms around her neck and the two women began to kiss each other tenderly.

"My heart is so soft, Andrzej, that I will not only forget about the roe, but if you ever need a young pine, or even a young oak, I shall not have the heart to refuse you."

"Your health, sir, you have a merciful and a Christian soul."

They began to drink to each other one health after another, to exchange hearty kisses, and to converse in gentle whispers, so that once more the talk of the peasants at the neighboring table could be heard.

"Damn it all! The man went to ruin. Did you live near him?"

"Next door. I saw the whole thing; true it is that sorrow destroys a man like an illness."

"Czerwiński can tell you. He might have lived to this day — I will say nothing but good of him this evening — he might have lived."

"Hard luck! He could not go out of doors at all, and he kept vomiting; he groaned and groaned and finally he died, poor fellow."

"Did they have a doctor?"

"Those doctors! If a man is fated to die, no matter if you give him a

fifty-acre field and fill him with good things up to the chin — he won't recover."

"True enough! Here's to you, Grzela!"

"To your health! And who was to blame for it all! To tell the honest truth, nobody but a pig and a woman. He had a sow as fat as butter, and he took it off to market, for he needed some cash. He went off with the pig; the snow was up to his middle and he got exhausted and worn out, as a man always does when he has to do trading. Then he ate some sausages and they lay dead on his stomach and he took sick. If he had only drunk some vodka, he would have been all right, honest to God, but he didn't drink even a dram."

"The poor fellow was afraid of hell in his own house."

"Ho! ho! His wife was no good, but clever with her fists. Sometimes she used to beat him, she did!"

"Your health, friend!"

"Same to you! Czerwiński can tell you: if he had only beaten the slut so that she couldn't see out of her eyes, then he'd have had a wife worth while!"

"You're right, bailiff; you're right. He was gentle of hand; had no good peasant common sense — and now he's under the sod. May the Lord give him eternal rest!"

"For ever and ever, amen! Here's to you, Grzela."

"A fine husband you are! Your wife is at the point of death, and here you are drinking, you pagans!" shouted a peasant woman, pushing her way up to them.

"What do I care! I have more brats than any other trash, and still they keep coming."

"Grzela, do not offend the Lord God, or He will take them from you."

"Have a drink, woman, and we'll start off directly."

"But the Lord Jesus," the woman began, "has not comforted my old age with a child. Yet I prayed to him, and went on a pilgrimage to Czenstochowa and got treated by lots of doctors — but it was no use. I'm left alone in the world, like this sinful finger — alone."

"You'll have a child, woman, when you're a hundred."

"You needn't talk, Czerwiński: wasn't I young once?"

"The Lord God entered into heaven, the devil into a woman, and yeast into beer — only nobody knows when! Take note of that, woman, for it's Czerwiński that tells you so!"

In the corner a young lad, the son of the organist of the place, was sitting on a chest, and in front of him stood a very old woman, who was whispering in a suppressed, tuneful voice.

"Seventy-six years have I been living, young gentleman, and I've seen black and white and all sorts of colors. I've been in service with gentry who drove only behind stallions, who ate off silver plates and talked for-

eign languages — and where are they now! Where? I know how to read books, and I was a householder, the foremost in the whole village, and I had children, and goods of all sorts — oh! — and they are all gone, wasted away, like the summer's sun that the Lord Jesus sends to comfort us sinners. I know it all, young gentleman, I know that whether it be a lord's life or a peasant's life, it is always nothing else than utter misery. I am a simple woman, I am seventy-six years old — and I have taken good note of everything. Young gentleman, has the world existed for six thousand years?"

"Almost six thousand years."

"You see, young gentleman, that I know everything, and so this is what I think: if the world has existed so many thousand years, and has been happy, then why have I had to suffer for so many years? How was I to blame?"

"It is certainly hard. God has given us life — and so —"

"Young gentleman," the old woman interrupted him abruptly, "I am a simple woman, and you are a learned young man, for you can play the organ and sing in Latin with the holy father, and you know when to strike the high notes and when the low ones — but I can tell you; perhaps I have sinful thoughts, but I can tell you that it's most surely the devil that sends poor souls into the world to suffer and to pine away in utter misery for so many years as I It is not the Lord God, though it is written in books, and though priests say so: no, it isn't! What would the dear Lord Jesus gain from making so many people suffer and pine away and perish? The Lord God is a good Lord and a just Lord. Life here is not sweet, not soft as velvet; it just tears us like a curry-comb, till a man pours out his heart's blood."

"What makes you talk like that, Jagustynka? It's absolutely sinful!"

"To do wrong to another man is the only sin, and I would not strike a dog with a stick, for he too is alive and suffers thereby. Young gentleman, I am a simple woman, but I have a heart scorched by fire like that coal on the hearth, tempered by the bitterness that I have drunk all my life both for myself and for others — and I know that because he hated the Lord God the devil gave life, in order that generations of men might wither away in the world for ages and ages. But the most belovèd Jesus has had compassion on us; He has overcome the evil one, and He is gradually gathering men to His own glory — and one day He will gather in all men. I am but waiting till the Skeleton touches me and says, 'Come!' I am waiting and am uttering a prayer that I may close my eyes speedily and have no longer any anguish and suffering — and that I may find true rest, rest, young gentleman."

She straightened herself up above the dozing organist, and drooped her withered countenance, furrowed by cares and old age. In her dim, tear-scorched eyes tears glistened; she wiped them quickly with her apron,

sighed softly, and turned to Tomek, who was sitting by himself on a box, with the bottle in his hand.

"Tomek, you have an evil look in your eyes," she whispered, touching him on the shoulder.

"What can it be but trouble? Don't you know that, woman?"

"I've heard something, but people say such different things that one can't tell what's truth and what's froth."

"They've discharged me," whispered the peasant gloomily.

"What for?"

And in her voice there was a note of boundless sympathy.

"What for? Because a man must always be giving presents to the foreman: geese in the autumn, butter at Shrovetide, a pig and eggs at Easter, and chickens at Whitsuntide — and I did not bring them in like the others, for where could I get them? I had nothing to give the children to eat; my wife was perishing of misery; the cow had died for lack of fodder; you know what the potatoes were like last fall — I dug fewer than I planted. I almost split myself with work, but I accomplished nothing for my wife, and nothing else either; I toiled on my job and at home, day and night, and could not get out of trouble. The foreman kept pecking at me, but what could I give him? I could have given it to him under the rib, for the children and I had nothing to put in our mouths. He nagged me and pestered me more and more. He wrote a report of me to the superintendent, that I was insolent, that I was lazy, that I slept on my job, that I did not patrol the track — finally he said that I had stolen some iron from the storehouse, that — "

"Tomek, did you take it? Tell me the truth; it makes no difference to you now."

"I did not take it, woman; I did not. May I perish at holy confession like a mad dog if I am lying! I never stole. Sometimes my comrades used to steal, but my father did not steal, and his son will never be a thief. I'm poor, but I'm not a thief all the same."

"And was that the only reason that they turned you out? They said that they found the iron in your house."

"Just so. That's the honest truth; they found it, only I did not put it there. Michał Rafałow promised to pay the foreman fifty rubles if he would give him a job on the railroad, and because there was no vacancy he hid the iron at my place and denounced me. They searched my premises, found the goods, and discharged me. I'm ruined, for though I knew who did it, I had no witnesses. Six people are left without bread. I can't find a job, there's nothing to eat, I can't live; and if the merciful Jesus does not help me, I can't hold out, I can't hold out."

He groaned helplessly and the tears flowed in a stream down his tanned countenance.

"O fate of men!" whispered the old woman bitterly. "Grief fairly fur-

rows the cheeks; the soul fairly shrivels up with suffering like a bird in the cold, and no help comes from anywhere. Only foolish folk say that there is goodness in the world; yes, there is goodness, but it amounts to nothing but words."

"Do not give up, Tomek!" she said to him consolingly. "The Lord Jesus has overcome the evil one, and why should not an honest man escape from misfortune with the aid of the Most Holy Virgin?" Then she went to the counter, bought two pans of buns and a quart of millet grits, and came back to him.

"Tomek, take the grits and the buns to your children. I am a poor lonely old woman and would give you more, but I have nothing myself. Whoever has sheep buys what he wishes, but I am a mere laborer on others' land. But, Tomek, I can give you some advice."

"Give it to me, woman, and the Lord Jesus and the Holy Virgin will reward you for helping a poor man."

"Go to the foreman tomorrow and bow down to his feet; perhaps he will take pity on you, for he has children himself. If you alone were to die of hunger, he wouldn't care — but that those poor things should perish, who can still do nothing for themselves, even he will not endure; it is a sin that little children should whine with hunger."

"No, woman, I won't go," whispered Tomek with gloomy obstinacy. "Never mind if I do perish! If I'm to die of hunger, I'll die, but I will never ask him for help. I lay at the feet of that son of hell and whined for work like a dog, and like a dog I whined for pity on my children — but he kicked me and told them to turn me out of doors! No, I won't go, for I am afraid of doing something sinful; I am afraid. For when I see him, I feel a longing to seize him by the throat and strangle him like a wild beast."

He whispered in a voice stifled by hatred and clenched his fists tighter and tighter; then he clutched his breast and began once more:

"My chest fairly aches, I try so hard to control myself; but I have suffered so much that I hardly know whether I could keep my temper."

"Baran, keep down that wolf within you; keep it down, for you may easily get into trouble."

"Tomorrow I'm going to the wood and cut faggots."

"Beggars cannot be choosers."

"The damned Jew pays only twenty kopeks for a third of a cord, and you have to break your back for it two whole days."

"Tomek, go straight off to the priest and implore him. He knows the officials well and might put in a word for you, so that they would give you work on the railroad."

"Bah! The priest often calls on the foreman, and they are on friendly terms."

"You foolish man, the priest always stands out for justice and for the poor. He can give you advice and help."

"I have nothing to carry in my paws, and I don't dare call on him empty-handed."

"You foolish man, you can't make him a present of your children — and what else have you?"

"True enough, but, all the same, not to take anything to his Reverence — "

"You foolish man, I tell you: go straight off, fall at the feet of his Reverence and tell him the whole story. Just beat your breast, and weep, and speak of the children — and you will see how compassionate the priest will be."

"Very well, I'll go," he whispered, easily convinced. He got up from the box, put on his sheepskin coat and hat and pushed his way out through the small room and through the dancers.

The old woman followed him, and outside the tavern gave him a last warning:

"Tomek, don't be rude to his Reverence; ask him politely. A landless peasant is like a bird in the water: it flaps its wings and has to chirp for the other birds to come and help it, for it would drown if left to itself."

He made no reply, for the frosty air made him gasp for breath, but he pulled down his sheepskin hat farther over his eyes and walked away from the tavern along a path that had been trodden across the fields.

"We will eat, and we will drink, and merry will we be," the fiddles sang after him.

"As God grants, as God grants!" mumbled the bass viols in a lower voice, marking the time gaily. But Tomek did not hear those voices, which made their way forth through the tavern thatch and scattered in the frosty air like a rain of sounds sparkling with diamonds — he only went straight on.

On the snow-covered fields the moonlight made everything as clear as by day.

Huge white clouds lay in the depths of the heavens, which extended over the earth in their calm, infinite majesty like silvery yellow curtains. The plains, variegated by wave-like elevations, and marked with skeletons of trees and heaps of stones, spread out in a sea of snow, of blinding, flashing whiteness. Such a deep silence reigned in the fields that Tomek could for a long time still hear the sounds issuing from the tavern, and now and then he would turn back to look at it and at the twinkling golden spots of light in the village. But then he would quicken his pace and begin to run, not heeding the frost, which nipped his cheeks and checked his breathing.

The frost-covered crosses by the wayside cast long blue shadows; he removed his hat before them, crossed himself piously and sighed deeply; from time to time he beat his benumbed hands against his shoulders and tightened his belt before he proceeded.

Occasionally a flock of partridges rose up with a low but piercing cry, circled for a moment, and disappeared in the white, silvery mist that hung over the snow; then again a hare leaped across the fields, stopped, listened, sat up, and fled away; again a formless grey cloud floated across the heavens and cast a bluish shadow on the snows; now some dry voice of the frost flew over the land and, shattered into millions of quavering notes, vibrated and gleamed and disturbed the divine calm of the winter night; now a rumbling, like a heavy sigh, came forth from the woods, a distant, hollow noise — and again there was quiet, deadness, desolation, and a great, sweet drowsiness on the earth.

Tomek paid no heed to anything, for he was planning how he would enter the priest's room, how he would fall at his feet, and how he would say, "Your Reverence"; how he would burst into tears and start to inform the beloved father of his sufferings and his misery. He became so earnest that tears of emotion already gleamed in his eyes, rolled down his cheeks, and froze on his mustache. But then he thought about his house and his children:

"I will send Marysia out to service, Józwa also; it will be better for the girls and easier for me." But his heart sank at the thought of parting with his children. "The dear little things are asleep, asleep," he reflected, feeling carefully of the buns and the grits that he carried in his bosom. "The Lord Jesus will tide us over till spring; then it will be easier to get work, and the children will earn something or other," he thought. "Sometimes Jesus scourges, scourges," he whispered, rubbing his face with snow. "The Lord Jesus is hard, is hard." He stopped and listened. From the manor stables, the grey walls of which loomed up in the distance, came the barking and yelping of dogs. He began to walk more slowly and to cast about him sharper and more anxious glances, for the snarling and whining were becoming ever nearer and more threatening. Soon he perceived a dozen dogs furiously tearing something to pieces.

At the farm the sheep had been dying of the rot by the hundreds. So the servants, after flaying their skins, had dragged them out of doors and buried them in the snow. From all sides the dogs gathered to the banquet table and feasted for whole days and nights, gorging themselves with the carrion.

Tomek gave them a wide berth and went diagonally towards the village, which was perched on the slopes of an elevation that was crowned by a small wooden church. Around the church was a cluster of mighty linden trees, which seemed seated there like elders, talking in whispers on the quiet moonlit nights. With their gigantic, forked bodies they defended the building from tempests and from evil fortune.

The parsonage stood somewhat lower down, in the middle of a garden planted on the hillside and adjoining the village. In front of a porch that was larger than many a peasant's cottage, Tomek stopped, took off his

hat, and began to shift from one foot to the other, for his courage had entirely deserted him. He looked at the windows, which were lighted, but shaded with roller curtains, scratched his head, and spat; once more he crossed himself in order to summon up his courage, but he did not venture to go in.

The church was so near by and was so mysteriously black, and its windows glowed so strangely in the light of the moon, the lindens had such a threatening air that evening, and the crosses on the ancient graves in the cemetery were so large and so sharply defined against the background of snow, that a sort of superstitious fright gripped Tomek by the throat. He began to shiver all over, but he held his ground.

At times a gloomy cloud spread over the moon, casting a transparent shadow like that of a fan. Then again there was a mysterious crackling in the garden bushes. Occasionally the shingles of the church or the poles of the fence snapped sharply with the frost. The ravens rustled their wings and crowded together noisily along the road, on heaps of dung. A horse neighed in the stable; the bleating of sheep became audible; or the grunting of pigs feeding at the trough came forth from the priest's sties and trembled for a moment in the air; then silence settled down once more and enveloped the whole scene.

Tomek still remained standing in the same spot, gazing mechanically now at the white vapors that arose from the morasses, now at the lights that glittered here and there in the village. Then he thought of the children. "Poor little things!" he whispered; and, overcoming his timidity, he immediately entered the priest's reception room.

At the rattle of the opening doors the priest rose from his table and hastily put on his spectacles. Tomek threw his hat in the corner and cast himself down full length at the priest's feet.

"Father! Beloved benefactor!" he whispered tearfully, embracing his legs.

"What? Who's this? Who are you? What do you want?"

The priest ejaculated his questions in a tone of alarm, for he had been startled by the violence of Tomek's movements.

"I have come to ask your Reverence to take pity on me."

The priest had finally got his spectacles in position. He glanced at the kneeling man and now said in a calm tone:

"Ah! Tomasz Baran!* Arise, my child, arise!"

He sat down and wiped his spectacles with a checkered handkerchief, which he then threw over some heaps of copper coins that were arranged regularly on the table.

Tomek arose and rubbed his tear-stained eyes with his sleeve.

"What have you to say to me? Have you any business? Perhaps somebody has died in your family?"

* "Thomas Ram." "Tomek" is a diminutive, "Tommy."

"Worse, dear father, for we are all slowly dying," he replied; and in a fairly calm fashion he began to relate how he had lost his place and could get no other work, and to tell of the misery that beset him and his children. He had tears in his eyes and a quiet, boundless despair in his voice. He told his story with such sincerity that the priest was constrained to believe him, at least in part, for over his white face, which was like a mask of bleached wax and full of a sort of congealed sweetness, flitted a shadow of sorrow and sympathy.

When Tomek concluded, the priest took a pinch of snuff from a silver box and was silent for a few moments. He had a very compassionate heart, but he had so many times been led astray by crocodile tears and feigned sincerity that he was now afraid to yield. So he put on a grave expression, puffed out his lips sternly, and hid as best he might the emotion that he felt within him.

"The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal!" he said in a harsh voice. "Rascals, how many times have I told you from the pulpit: Behold, God is punishing you, for ye heed not His holy commandments?"

"I did not steal, Father; I speak as I would at holy confession: I took nothing. It was only through malice, because I gave no presents or bribes, that they conspired against me and turned me out."

"Eighth: thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. You do not say your prayers, Baran; you do not remember them, I presume!"

"I have told the truth, Father, the holy truth. The foreman was always down on me, whether there was reason or whether there was not, for I gave him nothing. On the nine bank notes that they paid me each month I could barely keep myself alive."

"A man must faithfully contribute his tithes and his dues. Must I continually remind you what the Lord Jesus and the Holy Catholic Church teach us!"

"Dearest Father! I am a Christian, I go to confession, I make offerings for the holy mass; but I have come to ask your pity, for my children are dying of hunger, and my wits are beginning to give way; I cannot sleep for constant worry and I do not know which way to turn. I have run into debt with Jews and others; I have sold my last rags, I have sold the last pig that I had; and now I am stripped bare, so that only death could find anything to take from me. Lord! Lord!" he whispered heavily, "I can hold out no longer; unless you aid me, beloved Father, I can do nothing but die."

Once more he fell at the priest's feet and almost bellowed with unrestrained weeping. He shook and sobbed so pitifully that the priest turned away slightly to wipe his tears, and very gently, with trembling lips, he began to speak:

"My child, Christ suffered for us sinners; for us thankless children he gave himself to be crucified, to be dishonored by the base multitude; and

he said never a word, though they transfixed his feet with sharp nails, though blood flowed over his eyes, though his wounds ached. He complained not, but merely said: 'Thy will be done, O Lord!' My brother, Tomek Baran —" He broke off suddenly, for tears of compassion had veiled his face. He wiped them off hastily and whispered: "You are a poor man, Baran; a forsaken orphan, a poor man!"

A heavy silence ensued, interrupted only by the broken, trembling accents of Tomek's sobs and complaints.

"The day after tomorrow I will celebrate a holy mass in your behalf, in honor of the Lord's Transfiguration; perchance the Lord God will shed the light of his countenance upon thee. His goodness is without bounds; trust only in Him; pray and have faith!" said the priest impressively.

"In my hut there is not even a crumb of bread, and the children do nothing but whimper," Tomek whispered further.

"I can give you no help in that. Come to the mass and confess yourself, for then it will be easier for you to bear the cross that it has pleased the Lord to lay upon you."

Tomek gazed at the priest with bewildered eyes, not knowing what to say. He merely glanced at the heaps of copper coins on the table and for a moment felt a sort of vague longing to seize the money and run away. But this quickly passed; he rubbed his eyes with his fist, sighed deeply, and said:

"Perhaps, Father, you would put in a word for me with the officials, or maybe at the manor. I'm willing to work for any wages whatever, for they are all in a conspiracy against me, and so they will never give me any work. But I want to work, I want to."

"You were proud and headstrong. He who sows the wind reaps the whirlwind, but a quiet calf sucks two mothers. Remember that. I will say a word in your behalf, for you are poor; I would aid you at once, but you know that I myself am always short of funds. 'And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' I have nothing. You know, that scamp Antek — may he not receive the sacrament when he dies! — drove my black horse so hard that it died. I had laid by a trifle to buy me a new nag, but Wawrzon's house burned down and Klemba again lost his cow — and, God pity me! I am again left without a penny. What can I give you, my child — are you hungry?"

"I surely am, but that is no matter; the thing is that the children have had nothing to eat for two days."

"Dear God!" he whispered and, going to a cupboard set in the wall, he took out of it a loaf of bread, still almost untouched. He was about to give him the whole loaf; but, seeing Tomek's eyes greedily fixed on the money, he checked himself in time, and merely cut off a large piece for him.

Tomek thanked him heartily and made ready to depart.

"Wait a minute, I will give you a few kopeks; I can't give you many, for they are not mine." He picked up a heap of the copper coins. " You see, this money is for the Holy Father!"

"For the Holy Father!" whispered the peasant with pious terror and crossed himself quickly.

"Even so! Good, merciful, Christian souls contribute their pennies that the Holy Father may have something on which to live. Men have taken away from him all that he had and he is left poor, he, the successor of St. Peter. He, who has power to bind and to loose all things upon earth, he too is poor; he too suffers want, my child," — here almost unconsciously he shifted half of the coins to his other hand — "but his faithful flock will not let their shepherd perish" — he laid aside a few more. "Each man brings his widow's mite with filial love; for when you give something to the poor, it is as if you gave it to God Himself." He took out a dozen of the coins that remained in his hand. "Take them, my child; I have no more. Go, and God be with you! I will put in a word for you where it will do some good. You are poor, Tomek, but the mercy and power of the Lord are almighty." He kissed him on the crown of his head and made the sign of the cross over him in the air, whispering a prayer meanwhile.

Tomek went out, deeply moved, but also strengthened in spirit.

"May God give him health; he is a kind gentleman!" he whispered; and, heedless of any road or path, he went straight home across the snow-covered fields.

"Lord! Lord! Even the Holy Father is poor! They have taken everything from him! Oh, the dogs of Germans; oh, the heretics!" he thought and clenched his fists threateningly — and he fell into deep meditation over the misfortunes of Christ's Vicar.

His spirits had risen a trifle, as though he had had some relief from his anguish. The priest's pious and sympathetic words filled with emotion his simple, honest heart; he was penetrated with the warmth of hope.

"You are a poor man, Baran; you are a forsaken orphan, Tomek!" he repeated involuntarily the priest's words, and he was so inwardly moved at the recollected melody of the words that tears of tenderness flowed down his face and he unconsciously bent forward, as though he wished to embrace some one's feet.

The cold, which was growing fiercer, brought him completely to his senses, so that he almost forgot the priest and his own misery; he only eyed with increasing eagerness the outlines of his hut, which was dimly visible near the forest, and his heart beat with anxiety for his children. The hut, which had been built long ago for a brickmaker, had now fallen into absolute ruin. The flat roof of thin planks had fallen in and rested on the ceiling. The walls were askew, and had been propped up with stakes driven into the earth; on one side earth and pine needles had been heaped against them.

The desolation round about fairly froze one's blood. Close by stood a gloomy forest of fir and pine, like a sullen, impenetrable wall; from it there came a constant roaring, and the chattering and howling of thousands of voices, so that people avoided passing near by it. On frosty nights and thawing days the wolves came out of it in packs and went to the villages in search of food. It was a wild, uninhabited spot, but Tomek rented the hut from the manor, for it was near the railroad and cost him little, and in summer the children had a place to pasture the cows. He had grown accustomed to the deserted locality and had lost his liking for the village and for throngs of men; he had become a recluse who felt at ease only with his own family.

Running up to the hut, he looked in through the frosty pane, but the room was dark. He went in quietly and lighted the lamp. All the children were asleep in the single bed, huddled in the straw and covered with rags. In the hut it was colder than outside; the fetid dampness, redolent of decay, fairly stifled one. The ragged walls, covered with a layer of hoar frost, shone as if silvered. The floor, which was of trodden clay, now frozen stiff, echoed dully under his feet. He bent over the bed and listened to the breathing of the sleepers, for he had a sudden fear that they might have frozen.

"The poor little things are asleep!" he whispered joyously.

He brought some shavings from the hall and kindled a fire in an iron stove; then he chopped some ice in a pail and put it in a pot, which he immediately set on the fire. Half the bread that he had brought he crumbled into a bowl, salted it, and waited for the water to boil. He bustled about the room almost noiselessly, and kept stepping over to the bed and gazing at the children. In his blue eyes, so light that they seemed faded, shone that love which peasants feel for their children, who are dearer to them than aught else in the world.

"My orphans, you will have something to eat right away, right away," he whispered joyfully, and kept adding fuel to the fire. When the water began to boil he stepped up to the bed.

"Marysia! Józwa! Get up, children!" he called, shaking them. "Get up and have supper."

They awoke at once. There were five of them, four girls and a little boy about six years old. Tomek took the little fellow in his arms, wrapped the skirt of his sheepskin coat about him and sat down with him in front of the fire. The boy, heavy with sleep, began to cry and make faces.

"Hush, little son, hush! Here's some nice bread that the priest has sent for you children; take it, little son!"

The little fellow rubbed his nose and eyes and munched the bread greedily.

"Well, come on, girls; the brewis is ready."

He poured boiling water on the bread.

They crawled out of the bed, squatted about the bowl, and with amazing greediness applied themselves to the brewis.

The tint of the skin of the children's sallow, emaciated faces had something in common with the color of the ragged, damp, frost-covered walls; it seemed to complement them. Long misery, that peasant misery which slowly lays hold upon throats and gradually strangles them, had eloquently marked those faces. The skin clung to the bones, the eyes had a dull sparkle, the lips were drawn, the whole expression was unusually mobile yet at the same time apathetic. Tomek surveyed the children with a fatherly gaze, seldom touching the bowl himself, in order to leave as much as possible for them. But he gave special attention only to the boy, continually offering him bits of food.

"Eat, little son, eat! Were you very hungry?"

"You see," spoke up Marysia, "at noon I went to the village and Aunt Jadamowa gave me some potatoes. I boiled them and we ate them. But in the evening Józiek and Anka began to cry because their stomachs ached. They were hungry, but all I could do was to put them to bed."

"Eat, children; old Jagustynka gave us this bread and the priest the other. Marysia, here are some millet grits; you can cook them tomorrow. The merciful God will aid us. We'll find some work and then maybe we'll buy a bushel of potatoes or a peck of grits, so that we can get along till spring somehow or other."

"Then we'll buy a cow, shan't we, daddy?" asked Józiek.

The fire burned briskly and the red-hot stove diffused a pleasant warmth, so that a cricket began to chirp somewhere in the corner. The girls sat at their father's feet, huddling together, and gazed at him as at a holy picture. Only Marysia sat a little apart, on a bench, and now and then poked the coals with a stick.

"Will you buy a cow in the spring, daddy, really?"

"Yes indeed, my boy; I'll buy one. You will take it to pasture and Jagusia may go too."

"But she gave me a beating today, daddy!"

"Don't be afraid: I'll whip her and she won't hit you again soon."

"Will you buy a brindled cow, daddy?"

"A brindled cow or a gray one, little son."

"And will Marysia give me some milk, daddy?"

"Yes, my precious darling; she will."

"When, daddy?"

"In the spring, when the Lord Jesus brings warmer weather."

"And why is it so cold now, and not spring at all, daddy?"

"For the joy of the Lord Jesus, and for a warning to sinful people."

"So are we sinful, daddy? Józwa, Marysia, Jagusia, Anka, and I, daddy?"

"We are all sinful, my little son."

"And why are we sinful, daddy?"

"Good Lord! You're such a tiny little chap, and yet you're reasoning about things already."

"Then are all peasants sinful, daddy?"

"Peasants and gentlemen alike, my boy; everybody!"

"And will you buy some sheep, daddy?" he asked again, after a long pause, with difficulty opening his eyes, the lids of which were beginning to stick together.

"Yes, I will buy some for you, my little son. Marysia will spin the wool and make you some trousers."

"And a little jacket with buttons! Like Franek Wawrzon's! Really, daddy? And a skirt for Józwa, and for Anka! Really, daddy?"

"A jacket for you, and a skirt for Józwa, and clothes for all of us. If only the Holy Mother helps us, we shall have everything, my precious darlings."

He carried Józiek to the bed and tucked him in carefully.

"Now go to sleep, children; go to sleep and the night will soon be over."

The children began to say a prayer aloud. Tomek brought in a bundle of straw from the hall way, spread it between the stove and the bed, put out the lamp, wrapped himself in his sheepskin, and lay down to sleep.

Silence pervaded the room, interrupted only by the even breathing of the children and by a quiet sobbing.

"Marysia," he said after a long interval, hearing her weeping; "What is the matter with you, daughter?"

"Nothing, daddy; only it hurts me so that we are so poor, when we have never done any harm to anybody."

"Hush, daughter, don't cry! The priest has promised us help, and he said so beautifully that the Lord Jesus will certainly take pity on us. I shall get some work that will help us out of our trouble. Don't be afraid; the Lord God makes no haste, but He is just."

It was quiet once more; the weeping ceased. Only the cricket that had been awakened by the warmth chirped loudly; and at times the coals in the stove snapped and spread abroad in the darkness a crimson dust, each time fainter than before. A constantly increasing darkness and drowsiness settled down upon the room.

"Marysia, are you asleep?"

"I can't sleep! Sleep has gone far away from me; and whenever I close my eyes I fancy that mamma is standing in front of me, or that some lady in a splendid gown is walking by and beckoning to me, or that the pig that we sold is squealing behind the wall."

"Say a prayer, daughter; never mind, it's only hunger that makes such dreams come into your head. Tomorrow we'll go into the forest, and maybe I can cut some faggots."

"Hm! Aunt Jadamowa says that there is no getting through on the lanes

or on the forest road, for the snow is up to a man's head. Klomb said that the forest clerk had offered ten kopeks extra if only people would cut wood."

"Is any one coming from the village?"

"How can any one be coming, when the snow is so deep that I couldn't get out of the yard when I went for wood?"

They became silent again. A train passed by, so that the hut quivered and there was a threatening creak in the walls. Then only feeble echoes of the horns of the signal men could be heard.

There was absolute stillness, except that the dull roar of the forest and the sharp whistling of the wind penetrated through the window panes. Tomek could not go to sleep; he tossed from side to side and meditated dejectedly.

"Marysia, would you go out to service, daughter?" he asked in a low, anxious voice.

"If you bid me to, daddy, I'll go. The only thing is that I'll be better off myself, but it will be no easier for the rest of you."

Tomek made no reply, and soon they fell asleep.

On the next day their life dragged along the same path. Misery was encircling them with a ring that grew constantly tighter.

At noon they ate the remnant of yesterday's bread and grits.

Tomek merely looked into the children's eyes, patted their heads and said nothing, for despair was tearing his bowels. He crawled around the hut like a man asleep; he cut wood, trimmed some stakes, and prepared to go somewhere, watching the trains that passed by a short distance away. At the hours when he formerly went out to work he went out now too; he walked hastily to the railroad and still more hastily returned, for he bitterly reminded himself that it was useless to go anywhere!

So many years of subjection to mechanical, automatic toil had left a deep imprint on his character — lack of initiative. His self-command was absolutely deserting him, for he did not know how to go on living without work and without land. He had never needed to think of anything himself, since his late wife had done his thinking for him for sixteen years; and before her, the men for whom he had worked. He was one of those peasants to whom some one must needs say: "Go there, do this, think thus," — then he would go and do it. But now along with his disasters the labor of reflection had fallen upon him: so, however much he strove and struggled and writhed helplessly, he could form no plan. Misery bared its teeth at him and was biting his children — and he had sat for whole days, thoughtlessly buried within himself, and could find no means of escape. He did not go to beg of people in the village, for the idea never even occurred to him. All his life he had had to work hard for every morsel, had had to extort it by blood and sweat; nothing had ever come to him as a free gift. So now, if he thought of anything, it was of but one thing, to earn! He had no means of earning — and he fell exhausted.

Only yesterday in the tavern had the thought of cutting faggots dawned upon him, and old Jagustynka had advised him to apply for help to the priest.

In the afternoon, as soon as the cold had moderated a trifle, he took Marysia and went to the clearing, where lay heaps of wood that had been cut in the autumn. These were now so covered with snow that the whole clearing was one level stretch of dazzling whiteness.

"Marysia, can we manage it?" whispered Baran, scratching his head.

"It's the devil of a winter," grumbled the girl gloomily, thrusting her spade into the snow.

Without saying anything further, they set to digging out the fir trees.

They applied themselves feverishly to the work. Tomek did the work of four men and Marysia with a sort of furious passion dug unweariedly, heedless of the sweat that deluged her eyes and of the exhaustion that she soon felt. They hurled themselves at the snow as if it were some hated enemy, the impersonation of all their miseries; they dug their spades into it with wild, stony, peasant obstinacy.

The snow was frozen and almost as hard as ice, so that it was extremely difficult to cut it with the iron spades; work was very slow, and the resistance fairly maddened them. Tomek threw off his sheepskin, beneath which he had nothing but his shirt. Blind to aught but his work, he dug with a sort of fury; his coarse shirt became dark with sweat on his shoulders. He had also thrown off his hat, so that his hair, like a tousled mop, shook at every motion that he made.

"Damn you, curse you!" he muttered now and then with hatred; and only his tortured face, dreadful in its set expression, flashed above the snow like a flame of a bloody violet hue. Marysia occasionally squatted down to catch her breath and rest a bit, but soon she pulled herself together and with new fury tore at the white mass.

And the forest, white from the snow lodged on the branches, surrounded them like a lofty wall; it was quiet and calm as if buried in its winter sleep. At times a bough quivered under its load, and a cascade of white dust fell on the ground. Ravens flew cawing over the forest. Again a whole flock of magpies settled on the tall trees that had been left for seed, teetered on the boughs, flapped their wings, and, as if jeering at Tomek called: "Stupid Baran! Stupid!" They chattered so that Tomek, angered by their mockery, drove them off with chunks of snow. Silence again settled down, filled with the blinding gleam of the snow and the sun and broken only by the creaking of the spades, the whistle of great lumps of snow tossed into the air, and the hoarse, heavy breathing of the diggers.

The hours passed slowly, and the forest imperceptibly began to grow dim and clothe itself in the violet-purple mists of the west. Then it grew grey and slowly absorbed the darkness that was spreading from the coppery glow on the horizon. It darkened and finally seemed gradually to sink

into the depths of the approaching night and to merge into one endless mass with the snowy plain and fall into a sleepy revery.

Darkness was already upon them when they finished their toil. They had cleared three large fir trees.

Tomek straightened up, stretched himself, and striking his spade on the snow, said roughly:

"We've fixed you, you rascals! We've fixed you!" He carefully put on his coat and hat. "Go home to the hut, Marysia. I'll go to the Jew and get my money for the work; tomorrow I can finish a third of a cord easily enough. I'll bring you something to eat right away. Go along, daughter; and wrap yourself up, for you've worked terribly hard, and it grows cold after sunset." He stroked her face affectionately and disappeared in the depths of the forest.

Marysia wrapped her head in her apron, took the spades, and went slowly home through the forest. She felt not so much tired as hungry and very sleepy. At first she walked on without thinking of anything; but soon the forest began to seem to her so threatening and gloomy, it was so strangely black, and there was such a roaring and groaning in the depths of it, that an inexplicable terror overcame her. It seemed to her that countless tree trunks barred her way on all sides, that among them in the distance reddish eyes were glistening and the triangular muzzles of wolves were flashing. She closed her eyes for a moment, but her fright constantly increased. She began to fly along more swiftly; and, already almost beside herself, she sang to keep her courage up:

Soldiers and gallants, now hark to my word:
Attend to your farms, don't be roaming abroad!
Hu ha!

And again:

I fear not the lads, though they come in a crowd;
I fear not the wolves, though the pack may howl loud!
Hu ha!

But the poor little thing was dreadfully afraid.

For his work Tomek received from the forest clerk a ruble in cash and an order for provisions to the value of a ruble and twenty kopeks. The Jew was glad to pay him, for he knew him as an honest man and they sorely needed the faggots for delivery to the railroad.

Early on the next day Baran wrapped the ruble in a rag, had Marysia put on her Sunday clothes, and they started off for church. But the priest would accept nothing for the mass, and was so much touched that he had Tomek presented with a bushel of potatoes and a peck or more of grits.

Tomek confessed himself and through the entire church service lay on the floor of the church, stretched out like a cross. He prayed and implored so fervently, shaking with sobs, he begged so for grace and groaned so piti-

fully in his grief, complaints and entreaties, that the people gazed at him with respect as he lay prone before the altar.

"Jesus! Our Lady of Czenstochowa! Have mercy on me a sinner! I will go to Czenstochowa on foot; every day I will tell my beads; I will buy a banner for the church, I will buy candles! Have mercy on me a sinner! O sweet Virgin! O Queen of Heaven! I offer to Thee myself and my children. Give us help! I will work for any wages, if only I may not go begging; if only my children may not die of hunger! O holy, holy, holy Lord!"

Thus he groaned and wept, with bloody tears of complaint and entreaty, and implored grace.

The organ played a gentle, solemn hymn, which, like a purple wave of melody, floated over his head and filled his heart with holy, tremulous emotion; the voice of the priest seemed to gleam like the rainbow; it so consoled and heartened him that his tears flowed ever more abundantly, ever more gently. The tarnished gilding of the altars, the notes of the bells, the deep sighs of the worshipers, the whispered prayers, the kindly glances of the saints from their pictures, the dim rainbow light that poured in through the colored windows, the yellowish flames of the candles, the almost balsamic rhythm of the music that constantly floated down from the choir — all this, fused into an inexpressibly sweet, almost mystic harmony, kept Tomek even more humbly prostrate at the feet of the Almighty and inspired him with boundless confidence, consolation, and faith, so that at the end of the mass he could not collect his thoughts, but merely sighed, kissed the floor, and wept.

He left the church with his faith and his eagerness for work redoubled.

"Marysia!" he said when they were about half way home, and he paused for a moment, since the girl had been walking behind him. "Marysia, it seems to me that the Lord Jesus will give us aid, for did not his Reverence say that He is mindful of the lilies and the birds and even of the least of all worms? Then must not the beloved Jesus care for a man? Must he not?"

"The Lord Jesus must certainly care equally for all His creatures," she answered seriously.

Life now seemed brighter to him, since they had food for two or three days in the house and the cold had perceptibly moderated; at noon there had even been a slight thaw. Yet Tomek sensed a change in the air, for the sun had begun to be overcast and masses of thin grey clouds veiled the horizon. Hence he once more became uneasy.

"A snowstorm is brewing, but never mind. The Lord Jesus will blow and scatter it all away," he said to the children, as he went out into the forest to cut wood. Before evening he had piled up a quarter of a cord, but he had wearied himself frightfully. He went to sleep in a happy frame of mind, for the children had something to eat, and he felt that he himself had resumed his former way of life: he was at work.

On the next morning, when he awoke and looked out of doors, he became gloomy.

The snow was falling so fast that nothing could be seen, and the wind roared and whistled. A blizzard was coming on; there would be deep drifts, and there could be no thought of cutting wood in the forest.

And since the snow was heaping up, the winds brawling and contending on the fields, and the whole world growing dark, it was hard even to go outside of the hut.

There was almost no distinction between day and night. The grey, gloomy orgy of the hurricane rushed over the fields and plains and beat in powerful waves against Baran's hut and against the forest, which merely bent down in its struggle with the tempest, but rose again unconquered and terrible, for it became embittered by the struggle and roared, cracked and snapped, howled and bellowed wildly and protractedly, so that the children could not sleep at night and the birds fled from the woods to the fields. Tomek watched over the hut, which threatened to fall; finally he covered it completely with snow, so that it looked like a snowy mound.

Their provisions were exhausted and they had no money to buy fresh ones; furthermore the roads and fields were so heaped with snow that they could not have gone for them. On the second day of the blizzard trains became stuck in the drifts and all movement ceased entirely; men retired in alarm and gave place to the elements. Only on the morning of the third day did the tempest somewhat abate, but gigantic drifts smoked like craters with clouds of dusty snow.

Tomek put on his sheepskin, took a shovel, and went to the railroad track. The foreman, his assistants, the division engineer, and crowds of peasants brought in from the neighboring villages were all busy around a train that had got buried in a cut. They were distributing liquor and sausages to the workmen, in order to clear the track as quickly as possible.

In the white clouds of snowy dust Tomek saw hundreds of human silhouettes working merrily; he heard noisy talk, laughter, and the creaking of shovels. He eagerly took in all these sounds but grew more and more gloomy, since for him there was no place and no work. No one summoned him to labor. Chilled, hungry, and despairing, he stood at the crossing for a couple of hours, till he caught sight of the boss, bowed down to his feet and very humbly asked him for a job.

"You know, Baran, that a circular letter, sent all along the line, states that you were discharged for stealing, and that you must not be hired for any work on the road. What can I do for you, my dear man?"

Tomek made no reply, only sadly hung his head and crawled off to his hut.

"Brutes! Brutes, damn 'em!" he burst forth. He was so infuriated that he broke his shovel; and, when he reached home, flogged Marysia and kicked Józiek. He rushed about the room like a madman, tearing his hair;

but, since this did him no good and he soon became exhausted, he calmed down and waited patiently once more.

There was no news from the priest. The days dragged by frightfully slowly and in frightful hunger. One evening, after an all-day fast, Tomek had an idea.

The children kept crying. Józiek quietly complained that his chest ached and that something was gnawing at his stomach; he was feverish and in his sleep he tossed about, cried out, and begged for bread.

"Don't cry, son; I'll bring you something to eat," said Baran laconically. He took a sack and an ax, and started out towards the manor.

He waded through snow waist-deep, but managed to reach the stables where he had recently seen the dogs at their banquet. He searched for carrion; he groped in the snow with his feet and with the handle of the ax, but found nothing. He was about to abandon his fruitless quest, when he heard a low growling from the upper end of the building, and went towards it.

A half-dozen dogs were tearing at a sheep and growling. He scattered them with his ax. The dogs were loth to retire and gnashed their teeth at their rival.

Tomek selected the least tainted portions of the sheep, put them in his sack, which he threw over his shoulders, and started for home.

The dogs rushed after him, snarling; they jumped at his sack, tore at his sheepskin, and pressed upon him furiously. He drove them away with his ax and ran on at his best speed, but he fell into a ditch concealed beneath the snow. The dogs leaped upon him. There ensued a brief struggle, from which he came forth victorious, — but with his sheepskin torn at the shoulder, with a bitten hand, and with a disfigured face.

Two dogs were howling with pain, rolling over in the snow and staining it with their blood; the rest had scattered. Tomek gathered himself together with difficulty and crawled slowly homeward with his booty.

"Here is something to eat," he said to Marysia, throwing down his sack in the middle of the room.

They had something to eat; but Józiek, his best beloved child, fell seriously ill on the day after that repast.

He lay on the bed, red and swollen, perspiring all over, and so weak that he could not raise his head. Tomek fairly beat his head against the wall in his despair and anguish over his only son; finally he went to try to procure medicine.

The dairyman of the manor, who carried on a secret traffic in certain drugs, gave him some powders on credit, and some provisions as well. The powders were of no avail, for on the next day Józiek lay unconscious and only muttered disconnected words in his delirium.

As a last resource, Tomek rushed off to fetch old Jagustynka, who knew how to treat all diseases. Whether a man's hair was matted by the plica

or he suffered from some internal ailment; whether a peasant must be freed from a spell that had been cast on him or a child suffering from colic must be "laid out," she was equal to every occasion, healing by means of charms or herbs.

She came with him at once, but fairly clutched her head when she saw the sick boy.

"Good God! Only the Lord Jesus can help him!" she whispered.

"Do your best, woman! Heal my belovèd boy."

"We must lay him out, or fumigate him and say charms over him. I don't know anything else to do."

"Do anything, but do not let my darling child die! Lord! Such a strong little fellow! Next spring he could have taken the cows to pasture. And he was such a gentle, clever, good boy! O Lord!" Tomek groaned and wept.

"If the Lord Jesus loves any one, he gives him all gifts. But, Tomek, the holy father told me that you must go to the station right away; the superintendent will be there — he is coming to look over those drifts. Go right away; only do not be proud: bow down to his knees politely and beg of him. The priest told me that he himself would come later and talk with him."

"And leave the boy?"

"Go along. I will look after the boy and do what needs to be done for him."

"You are so kind, woman, that one of my own kin could not be better."

"Well, why should I not be kind?"

"Other women have not so much consideration."

"That's because others think only of their husbands and children and home troubles. Well, go along!"

Tomek set out for the station, though at a lingering pace.

The old woman brought from the village some herbs and a gray covered earthenware pot, in which she started to boil some mixture. She stripped Józiek and laid him out in the center of the hut, spreading beneath him a bundle of clean straw. He lay quiet and hardly breathed; he was unconscious.

Then she threw into the pot a bit of wax from a holy candle. As soon as it had dissolved in the boiling water, she began to rub the lad with the mixture, muttering some unintelligible words.

The girls cowered under the stove and watched the ceremony with terror.

With the water that remained from the rubbing the old woman marked a sort of triangle, in the center of which lay Józiek. Then, stepping to the first corner of the room, she said in a loud voice and with unction: "A drop to the black and a pint to the white!" She poured out a drop in the corner and slopped a whole stream on the floor. This she repeated three

times. Then she took the earthenware lid of the pot, laid on it some glowing coals, and on them sprinkled dry bits of sheep's dung, some dried flowers of shepherd's purse, and half a garland of sundew that had been blessed on the seventh day after Corpus Christi. She blew nine times, until it was all aglow and a thin stream of smoke floated in the air; then she began to fumigate the boy lying on the floor and to whisper a formula of purification.

Next she fumigated the walls. Finally she went out of doors and, heedless of the drifts, walked three times around the hut, not pausing for breath and ceaselessly fumigating.

The boy still lay stretched out motionless. His body was covered with bluish spots, it was swollen, dry, and shining.

Jagustynka, after rubbing him once more with the water, wrapped him in a piece of cloth, and put him on the bed. Then she attended to the other children.

Meanwhile Tomek had found the superintendent at the station, where he caught sight of him walking with the foreman in the huge, magnificently dirty third-class waiting room. He at once took his stand at the door, erect as a flagpole, and waited, for he dared not go a step farther.

But they strolled back and forth, so engrossed in their conversation that they did not even notice his arrival. Whenever they came near him, Tomek drew himself up still more stiffly and opened his mouth; but since they turned about very quickly, he was always too late. Finally, after a long interval of waiting for an opportunity, he gathered up his courage and said in a choked and trembling voice:

"I beg the attention of his Honor the Superintendent."

The superintendent did not hear, for the foreman was saying in a low voice:

"I permit myself, superintendent, to call your attention to the fact that the policy of the Vatican is unfavorable to us, and that the flirtations of the Roman Curia with the France of today —"

"A magnificent country, magnificent!" whispered the superintendent, adjusting his monocle.

"The land of revolutionists, of Masons, of atheism; the land of eternal anarchy!"

"Yes, but also the land of the Second Empire."

"Do you incline to what is termed Bonapartism, superintendent?"

"Above all else, I incline to Parisism, to the royal rule of Paris over the world," — and he smiled sweetly at his memories of the cosmopolitan brothel and plucked delicately at his grizzled and truly senatorial beard.

"I beg the attention of his Honor the Superintendent," said Tomek once more, but somewhat louder, for he had grown impatient, and his anxiety about Józiek was constantly increasing.

"Were you long in Paris, sir?"

"Fifteen years. A moment, I tell you, a splendid moment."

He became silent. The foreman twirled his luxuriant mustaches, while the superintendent cast a melancholy glance at his own nails and twirled his monocle.

"I beg the attention of his Honor the Superintendent," Tomek almost shouted, for the thought that at home Józiek might be dying filled him with such acute fear that he now was at a loss what to do.

Hearing him, the superintendent came to a standstill, carefully put the monocle in his eye, and said:

"Ha! What do you wish, friend?"

Tomek threw himself at his feet and began to speak rapidly and disconnectedly:

"I was discharged, your Honor; they fired me. I was employed here fifteen years and now I'm out of a job. They won't take me back. My five motherless children are left without bread. I've come to beg the mercy of your Honor the Superintendent. I'm so worn out with misery that I can't catch my breath. I know all kinds of railroad work. I had a good record."

"May I say, superintendent, that this is Tomek Baran, a section hand, who was discharged for stealing railway iron."

"I did not steal, your Hon—, the Superin—, but they fired me. I took nothing; I would say so at holy confession. They fired me, poor fellow, and took the pension money I had earned, and deducted from my wages, and took my deposit. I was left with nothing at all — like this finger!"

"He might have been called before the criminal court," whispered the overseer, looking out of the window indifferently.

"You see, friend; you deserved a prison sentence," said the superintendent with dignity.

"Why should I go to the criminal court? Did I kill anybody? Did I steal anything?" shouted Tomek fiercely and trembled all over with sudden fury.

"The affair was mercifully hushed up, for he has many children."

"They did not put you in jail, for they had pity on your children! You should be grateful!" repeated the superintendent slowly and solemnly.

"I have come to ask for justice. The foreman knows how they treated me. The foreman himself —"

"A denunciation! Here you have a specimen of our dear people, superintendent!"

"Neither my father nor his father ever denounced anybody, and I never will either. I'll say to his face how it happened. And the pension money that it took me fifteen years to earn I won't give up, even if I lose the interest, and I won't give up my deposit."

"He cannot receive his pension deposits, for the law is clear on the point."

"The law means what is just, and is it just to turn out an innocent man? Is it just not to return him the money that was deducted from his hard-earned wages for so many years? Is it just? I'll go to court and prove my rights, for I've been wronged!" shouted Tomek, getting more and more excited.

"It's no use talking with the fellow here! Don't you know the instructions?"

"I know this, that the authorities wrote down the instructions for their own use, and that they're slow about giving justice to poor people. Any louse or other vermin knows how to cheat."

"Be silent, fellow! What do you mean, curse you? Are you going to shout and brawl here?" cried the foreman with an aristocratic air.

"I've been injured, and so I'll shout."

"You're a thief; you're nothing but a brute."

"I a thief! You pestilential upstart, I a thief! You scoundrel! I!" cried Tomek, clenching his fists and unconsciously moving forward.

"Porter! Turn out this booby; and if he doesn't quiet down, call the police! Come on, superintendent. Such beasts! The only way you can deal with them is with a stick."

They went out on the platform.

"I'll count your ribs for you, you upstart; I'll make you feel worse than the rickets, you mad dog!" whispered Tomek, and such a hurricane of wrath and hatred flooded his heart and brain that beads of perspiration came out on his brow. He shook all over in a spasm of fury, and had a mad desire to run after the foreman, to seize him by the throat and beat him — beat him — beat him! Yet he quickly shook off this feeling, went out of the station, and sped home with all his might.

In the hut he found a crowd of people. Józiek was already dying.

The boy, with a holy candle in his hand, lay on his back, stiff as a rod, and was wheezing, with difficulty inhaling the air through his parched lips.

Peasants from the village were kneeling about the bed, repeating the litany after old Andrzej the sacristan. Their faces were stern, and in their eyes lurked an expression of calm, almost stony resignation. The girls, sisters of the dying boy, were weeping and wailing loudly. Throughout the whole room, which was filled with the yellow gleams of the candlelight, there was an atmosphere of tragedy.

"Jesus Maria! Jesus Maria!" moaned Tomek, with his bewildered eyes fixed on the face of his only son, and he tore his hair in helpless despair.

"Quiet, Tomek, quiet!" said Jagustynka to him consolingly, in a low voice. "The Lord Jesus is pleased to take the little soul into his own glorious heaven, so what can you, a feeble worm, do to oppose him? What?"

"My little son, my belovèd child, my silver and gold!" groaned Tomek.

"I fumigated him, I laid him out — and it did not help. Thy will be done, O Lord!"

"From all despair! —" whispered the sacristan in a trembling voice.

"Deliver us, O Lord!" answered the women hastily.

This whisper of burning voices, of sighs, of weeping, of dejection, spread through the room like a golden stream and came back to the dying boy, who lay in the glory of the candle light, who was stretched out even more rigidly, who opened his lips more widely and who tugged with his left hand at the coat that covered his bosom.

"Oh, my little golden son! Oh, my belovèd child!" wailed Tomek. "You are leaving us, my darling baby, you are leaving us! You pay no heed to your father's weeping; you have no pity for our desolation; you leave us alone in our misery! And, dearest child, you are going to Jesus! Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"Oh, darling brother, don't desert us; dearest boy, don't leave us!" groaned Marysia, supporting the candle for him.

"From everlasting damnation deliver us, O Lord!" sounded the voices again, more strongly.

"You will never drive the cows, my belovèd boy. You will not pull your sisters' hair, my son; you will not run off to the village. You will never watch for the birds in the spring; you will not, you will not."

"Do not weep, Tomek, for —"

"From sudden and unlooked-for death deliver us, O Lord!"

"And this morning he was saying: 'Daddy,' he says, 'I won't die. Daddy, don't let Death take me, daddy; I won't leave you.' And he whimpered so, like a puppy that sees destruction and death. Oh, how wretched we are; how wretched! How can I relieve you, my son; how can I! The poor little fellow, something hurt him inside, for he just held on to his precious little stomach and groaned with pain. He said a prayer with Marysia, while the precious tears were rolling in a stream down his cheeks; and he shook all over, like an aspen!"

Józiek all at once ceased wheezing. He opened his lips with a long, hoarse expiration, trembled violently with his whole body, and raised his head a trifle. Then, with a wandering glance at those standing by, he fell back on the pillow; and, stretched out stiff, his glassy eyes fixed on the ceiling and with a terrible suppressed cry on his dumb lips, he died.

The candle fell from his hands, his fingers relaxed, his face became serene; he was now indifferent to all happiness and to all misery.

There arose an appalling weeping and wailing.

"Be quiet, people;" called Jagustynka, opening the doors wide; "be quiet even if you say no prayers. Let the little soul depart in peace; let not your lamenting withhold it from the dear Jesus."

Quiet was restored, and soon all except the old woman dispersed to their homes.

Till the moment of the burial Tomek felt so overwhelmed with grief and despair at the loss of his only son that for whole days he sat motionless by the stove, oblivious of all about him. He seemed to wrap himself in his own sorrow; he felt that an iron hand had seized his soul and was crushing it so terribly that from very excess of pain he could neither move nor cry out.

He followed the body to the grave, and had enough self-possession to support the coffin on the cart; but he gazed blankly at men and at the world; he hardly heard the chants or the words of comfort of which the peasants and the priest were not chary.

"Death is certainly laying hold of me," he thought, feeling within him a strange calm. Peace was descending on his soul.

"I suppose I'm going to die!" he whispered as he returned home alone from the cemetery. The priest had detained the peasants and was addressing them with deep feeling, but Tomek paid no heed to this, though he heard his own name mentioned. He went his solitary way and gazed now at the broad fields, strewn with downy snow and marked here and there with pear trees, now at the bright sky, now at the golden disk of the sun. He fancied that the whole world was slowly swaying like a bell, and that the sun was beating on the black walls of the forests as on bronze towers, and that sweet sounds, like the rustling of ripening grain, like the murmur of the forests in midsummer, like the twittering of birds in the thatch, were enfolding him, filling his brain and his soul with a great sweetness, and rocking him, rocking him into ever deeper and deeper slumber.

"I suppose I'm going to die," he thought, being unable to comprehend what was going on within him.

He reached his hut and took his usual seat, no longer seeing what was going on around him. He had struggled with life as best he could, but this last blow had entirely exhausted him. Now he knew that he could accomplish nothing for himself, that he must perish: so everything became indifferent to him; with stony resignation he bowed his head and submitted to fate. He thought neither of himself, nor of the children who were left to him, nor of anything — he merely awaited the end.

He distinguished that a dozen people had come into the room, that they were walking about him, that they were saying something — but he understood nothing. He stretched himself out on the bench with his back to the room, pulled his sheepkin over his head, and lay there as if dead.

"Friend," began Czerwiński, who had come in with the rest, and who saw that Tomek was apparently unaware of their arrival. "Friend, it is plain that you are in trouble!"

Tomek turned away slightly and said in a dull, choked voice: "I shall surely die; death is certainly laying hold of me."

"Friend, your thoughts are sinful. Just listen to what Czerwiński is telling you. We have come here with good will, to comfort and help you as

best we may. You are a poor man, Tomek, and an honest one; but you are too proud. You went to beg aid of the gentry, but we are nearer to you. Of course no one came to force his help on you, for each man has his own misery eating into him, a wife that keeps nagging him, and his own troubles to think of — but there is no meat without a bone, and no man with a heart of stone. Just take notice what Czerwiński is telling you. We waited for you to come and say to us, as to brothers: 'Here, help me! I am in trouble. Give me some money, either for me to work off later, or as a loan, or as a free gift.' We would have given it to you, for we know that you have been wronged and that you are poor. We are your own countrymen and Christians; only apes bite each others' legs: men have to hold together. We have come to an agreement, and each of us has brought what he could. Take our gifts, Tomek, and may they bring you health!"
"*In secula seculorum ament!*" concluded the sacristan piously.

The women began to untie parcels, unfold aprons, and open baskets. Each one laid down beside Tomek what she had brought: a loaf of bread, or some potatoes, or grits, or a few quarts of meal, or a lump of rock salt, or a string of mushrooms, or a side of bacon, or a dried cheese. Finally Jagustynka put down a hen that she had tied up.

"It is laying, Tomek," she said. "You will have eggs, and chickens in the spring."

Tomek raised himself up on the bench, gazed at them all, listened, and marveled. Slowly his heart began to throb, a pleasant warmth ran over him, and his throat began to choke more and more, so that finally he could no longer restrain himself, but burst out into loud sobs.

"Belovèd brothers, Christian people, how can I ever repay you!" he whispered through his tears. But without letting him speak further they clasped him in their arms and kissed him. He returned their embraces, bowed down to the feet of the older visitors, thanked them, and trembled all over with emotion.

"You can repay us by friendly conduct, or even by your prayers," said Czerwiński sententiously.

"*Dominus vobiscum ament*," put in the sacristan.

"Furthermore, by the advice of his Reverence, we have decided, in order to make it easier for you to live through the winter, that until spring comes I will take Józwa; Klomb, Marysia; Gulbas, Jagusia; and Boryna will take Anka. The girls will not suffer under our care, and you can get a fresh start better by yourself. Jagustynka says that she will move over to your place, so that you may have some one to cook for you and a woman to look after the house."

"I will stay with you, Tomek, for I am alone in the world too. I won't eat you out of house and home; I can earn a bit myself, and it will be better for me anyhow to have a man to protect me."

"Good Lord, friends, this kindness of yours fairly makes spring in my heart!"

"You are so used to misery that we have to pull you out of it by main force."

"If the cart be not your own, leave it even though you drown."

"*Ora pro nobis Domine ament!*" added the sacristan. He took from his pocket a flask of liquor, cleared his throat, poured out a glassful, and resumed:

"Gentlemen, on this occasion the Holy Scripture saith: '*Ave maristeli deo gratiasament.*' *" Here he drained his glass. "As it is good to drink a bit of whiskey in order to drive out ill humors from the belly, so do you, Tomek Baran, drink. And then let us say a prayer in behalf of thy son Józef, of blessed memory — and *mea culpa, mea maxima culpa ament.*"

They seated themselves wherever they could find places, comforted themselves with a bit of whiskey, had a bite of bread, sang pious songs in honor of the dead boy — and dispersed.

On the next day the women came to take home the girls.

It was hard for Tomek to part with them, for they wept, fell at his feet, and begged him not to give them up; but Baran had made his resolve: so he merely called out roughly:

"Get along, or I'll flog you within an inch of your life."

But as soon as they were gone, he went out into the forest and wandered about all day.

The winter had begun to moderate, great thaws had come, and so much snow had disappeared that the forest resounded with the ceaseless din of axes cutting faggots.

Tomek went out to work every day.

He felt lonesome without the girls, especially in the evening when he came home from work. Though supper was always ready, he missed the children's heads around the bowl and yearned for the prattling of Józiek.

Now and then one of the girls would run in from the village, sit for a few moments, and talk about her benefactors and what she had to eat and to wear. Then she would hurry away for she was eager to get back to the village and to people; and she found that ragged, miserable hut a trifle oppressive. Tomek understood this perfectly, for once, when Marysia had just left, he commented on it to Jagustynka. The old woman, by the way, in what time she had left from her petty household duties, was always spinning flax, carding wool, or winding her yarn into skeins.

"My dear dead boy would never have deserted me like that," said Tomek; "he never would. Girls are good, and mine are too; but all the same — they are nothing but girls," and he waved his hand.

"To be sure, I am a woman myself, but I can tell you, there is nothing like a boy. He's quicker to go astray, but he's quicker at work too. If he were as old as Marysia, wouldn't he be working on the railroad now?"

* Here and elsewhere the sacristan's Latin is of a peasant variety.

"He'd certainly be at work there. Though they won't give me a job, they'd give him one."

Immediately this brought back to him his misfortune and his wrongs. At last he asked the old woman:

"Why is it, woman, that, though we and the gentry have the same speech and the same faith, they snarl at us like dogs and won't give us a decent word; if they can cheat us, they cheat us — and they or the Jews own everything?"

"Why? It's the devil's doing, nothing else. And why does the devil keep little souls in pitch, like hemp in water?" she inquired, as she started her spindle.

"I suppose it's because the souls are sinful."

"And if folks are stupid, aren't they sinful?"

"And why are they stupid?"

"Oh, if everybody knew *why*, and *how*, and *what for!* Then no man would hold another by the neck like an eel, or crush in his breast as if he were a hog being slaughtered. He would not!"

"It is wrong."

"If it is so, it must be so."

"Sure. No peasant's head will ever make it better."

"No other head will either, even if it be as learned as the priest's, or some other clergyman's."

"Well then?"

"Well, it'll get better of itself when the time comes. Just notice: why don't they sow oats when it's time to dig potatoes?"

"When winter's coming it's no time to sow oats."

"Why don't you go out to the fields with a plow or harrow at Candlemas? Why don't they clip sheep at Shrovetide? Because that's not the right time; because the Lord Jesus has settled the times and seasons for everything. Just notice how all this is God's holy law."

"True, woman, I notice it; but it makes me sick to think that even if a man wishes to get some good thing ahead of time, he just can't."

"Oh! Every man must always be wishing, but he must watch his time too. In spring the time comes to plant potatoes and to sow oats: then if you don't wish to plant and don't wish to sow, will you have anything to eat at digging time? Will you have anything to harvest when harvest time comes?"

"True, woman, true! You have a wise way of thinking, I swear."

"Every man must think for himself and for others, for the swine will never think for men."

"True, woman, true!"

Thus Tomek Baran and old Jagustynka conversed during the long March evenings.

Jugoslavia

INTRODUCTION

A MAJORITY of the population of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, established in 1919, speak essentially the same language. In common with several other European literatures, that of present-day Jugoslavia is based on a common store of folk-material. It did not develop to any great extent until the Nineteenth Century.

In this volume a Croatian tale has been chosen as characteristic of modern Jugoslav literature, first because the Croatian writers have excelled in the form, and because Gjalski is one of the greatest figures of the day.

LJUBA BABIC-GJALSKI

(1854-)

GJALSKI [1] (born in 1854) is the most prolific and popular fiction writer of modern Croatia. He has specialised in the depiction of the country people of his own land. The tale that follows is an absorbing mystery story, written with extraordinary skill. It was first published in 1890.

The story appears here for the first time in English. It was especially translated by John J. Batistich and George R. Noyes, and is published by permission of the author and of the translators.

THE DREAM OF DOCTOR MISIC

FROM time immemorial the Jabučevac manor house had been famous as the abode of ghosts, apparitions, and sundry other marvels. It was an old wooden structure, very much battered. Its first lords had died long ago and subsequent holders, for some reason or other, had never succeeded in keeping possession very long: ownership of the manor changed hands every five or six years. At last a Jew got hold of the estate: the land he leased to farmers, but the house he left empty and deserted. From year to year the wretched dwelling presented a more and more pitiful appearance, and every autumn the wind blew more and more shingles from its roof. This wobegone appearance increased the already evil repute of the house, so that not even the most drunken villager would pass it at night without crossing himself piously and devoutly.

But the time came when a tenant was found for the deserted place. A new doctor was appointed for the district. As it was impossible for him to find a house in the district seat or elsewhere in the neighborhood, he was forced to accept the manor for his new abode. The ill-fame of his chosen home did not bother him in the least. He was only afraid of the rats and mice and of the dilapidated roof. So that when the roof was patched up and the house cleaned, Dr. Mišić was thoroughly satisfied

[1] On the title-page of most of his books the author's name is Ksaver Sandor Gjalski. In his recent letters he signs himself Ljuba Babic-Gjalski. His name seems originally to have been Babic; then he wrote under the name of Gjalski, (the name of one of his grandfathers), and then probably combined the two. In the library of Congress, Washington, the name is Ljubomir Babic. There are other variations. I use the form suggested by his agent and translator. B.H.C.

with his new home. And when he learned from his neighbor Batoric that he was distantly related to the first lords of the manor, the noble family of the Jabukoci, he felt as though he were in his ancestral home. To the gossip that was in circulation concerning the manor house and its horrors, he paid no attention, nor did it worry him for a moment. How could he, a man of science — real, experimental, positive science — imbued with the ideas of "the enlightened nineteenth century," believe in things upon which he could not put his finger, and which he could not prove experimentally! Especially in such nonsense as ghosts, prophetic dreams, and so on! His modern intellect, with its cold logic, was so far removed from all that, that "magnificus" Radičević, who tried to explain all these stories in terms of the fourth dimension, appeared to him mentally unbalanced; and the elderly ladies, still saturated with romanticism, who forced themselves into believing such tales, impressed him as immeasurably stupid. To their awed questions whether he had already seen any apparitions, he could only answer by laughing in their faces with gay, carefree, almost Homeric laughter. Indeed, the reputation of the manor was actually pleasing to him. It afforded him many pleasantries in society, and in his work it did him no harm.

Despite the fearful reputation of the manor, people would come to it, and the doctor's waiting room was always filled with patients. Of course, at night no one would come. "At least the night is my own!" the doctor would say contentedly to himself; and every night he went to bed feeling positive that he should not be disturbed by any emergency calls. "That's a bad enough business in the city, but here in the village, with these abominable roads, gullies and ditches!" he would mutter, despite all his devotion to his calling.

He was a very capable and serious man, who had passed his first youth. His age may have been thirty-four. He was not married, nor did he contemplate marrying in the near future. Devotion to his calling was uppermost in his mind. A physician's duty he likened to that of a soldier. Both physician and soldier must always be ready for any sacrifice. "There are in our calling thousands of situations which are very similar to those in battle, where bullets fly about your head. Much too frequently it is a very precarious kind of business. How then can a man assume the additional burden of a wife!" Moreover he was not overconfident of his health. His parents had died early; his mother had been afflicted with a serious nervous disease. "I am not conscious of any illness; but still you never can tell — 'an apple never falls far from the tree.' It would not do to leave a widow behind me," he would usually reply to the solicitations and advice of relatives and friends.

But there was still another reason why he had never ventured on matrimony. He had never in his life been in love. This was not because his temperament was cold and phlegmatic. On the contrary, his was one of those

fiery and passionate natures that because of their very fire and passion cannot confide their feelings and desires to one single beauty. He was carried away and inflamed by every beauty. It could be said that he loved the whole of the fair sex, with their fine and graceful forms, their soft flesh, their luxuriant hair and the grace of their sweet and delicate motions. He never spoke in his enthusiasm of any particular fair woman that might catch his artistic eye, inflame his blood, and inebriate his spirit. Instead of any single woman he would glorify the whole sex as such, its wondrous Juno-like forms as such, its charming and captivating Venus-like lines as such. And in the dark flashing glance of a lovely woman whom he embraced, he would always behold the glance of the whole sex and the glance of beauty personified. This enthusiasm kept him from sinking into the mire of ordinary animal passion. His desires left his soul pure because he always yearned for perfection; in it alone could he find means to quench the thirst of his soul and body. With this attitude toward the fair sex, there was nothing to prevent him from devoting himself with his whole heart to the medical profession, which carried him to the highest spiritual levels.

Such was Doctor Mišić. — His life in the Jabučevac manor house he made comfortable. In a short time he acquired the reputation of a capable and conscientious physician, so that his practice yielded him a goodly income, despite the proverbial slowness of the nobility in paying for doctors' visits. Little by little the old house lost a great deal of its rustiness and acquired a certain amount of respectability. But the manor retained its evil reputation. The doctor to be sure, remained of necessity as much of an unbeliever as ever, although he used the worst reputed chamber in the house as his bed room. But the servants! With them the poor doctor was always having difficulties. They were continually giving up their positions and deserting him. And despite the fact that he was kind to them and that he never supervised their manipulation of wine, coffee and sugar, but let them manage everything, no one would stay with him longer than a month. Every man and woman would leave him with tearful eyes, kissing his hands and assuring him that he or she was not leaving the household on his account — the master was so kind — but because he could not stand any longer the frightful nights, with their unearthly noises and apparitions. One of the servants saw strange shadows, another saw flames dancing, and a third even insisted that a spook had come to shave him; and what is more, a fat cook was able to repeat whole conversations she had had with the souls of the departed and begged the good doctor to flee the accursed house immediately. Of course she did not tell of the bottles of rum that she had stolen and consumed but the doctor guessed how she had acquired her extraordinary gift of conversing with the denizens of the world beyond, and he laughed more than ever at the fables and stories. Naturally he himself never heard or saw anything unusual. Any knocking, or noises, or

rapping he could explain every time as due to rats, mice or wind. Finally he got used to that sort of thing also, and he slept soundly every night, to the great disappointment of his neighbor Radičević, who earnestly hoped that the doctor's experience in the old house would drive him into the camp of the adherents of the fourth dimension. The doctor's quiet nights brought still more disappointment to Baroness Albahic who would ask him every day how he had slept the preceding night, and whether he had seen anything, and who upon receiving a negative answer would frown with displeasure.

So passed about eight months. The doctor's nights continued to be equally quiet; but every morning — for some time — he had felt a sort of spiritual uneasiness, or rather a sort of melancholy that weighed heavily on his serene self. It was a strange, new experience. Occasionally he would feel an urge to give vent to his tears, as though affected by some great sorrow. During such moments it seemed as though his sunny nature had left him forever. The day's tasks would disperse this feeling, but almost every morning it would come back. He could not explain this new experience. His life passed in a quiet and simple fashion and there was not a single incident in his life that should have disturbed or depressed him. On the contrary everything that happened should have made him contented. The reason then lay within himself. At first he thought of a possible attack of some serious malady; but he dismissed this idea instantly — physically he had rarely felt better. Then he remembered certain forebodings. His departed mother had always insisted that she could foretell the future. At first thought he regarded this idea as so ridiculous and absurd that he rejected it immediately. He, an intelligent man, thoroughly imbued with modern science, could not give himself to such mystic interpretation of phenomena. He simply could not bring himself to believe in presentiments. In the end he ascribed the occurrences to gastric causes. "There must be some disorder in my digestion which deranges the circulation of my blood, and this in turn causes unpleasant dreams which, because of my sound sleeping, leave nothing except this melancholy feeling when I wake up." So argued Doctor Mišić with himself; and with this physiological explanation he was thoroughly satisfied, convinced that he had hit upon the truth, or, as he put it, that he had made a true diagnosis. He now decided to subject himself to a stricter diet. He became very careful of what and when he ate and drank. He was also careful not to overwork. But despite these precautions his inner struggles did not disappear. He then became nervous and excited. Every little thing that fell down made him jump and tremble all over, and he felt an acute pain as if he had received a blow over his temples. The clinking of two glasses together was enough to send a bolt through his head that would daze him. An ever deeper melancholy descended upon his spirit. There were moments in which he was sad to the utmost degree. He was on the verge of bursting

into tears. And yet he could not account for such sadness. It had no content or visible form. It was like a hoarse, deep roaring, or a dark impenetrable remoteness.

Mišić became completely changed. His friends noticed the change. It was once the subject of conversation at the home of magnificus Radičević. Dr. Mišić still defended his diagnosis.

"You are mistaken," interrupted the magnificus eagerly. "You cannot explain it in terms of your physiology. You yourself admit that your digestion is in perfect order. Your supposed dreams, then, cannot be caused by indigestion. It is what I have always told you. The Jabučevac manor is recognized as an excellent medium for communication with a world that is beyond our five senses, and that has more than three dimensions. In that excellent medium you yourself cannot help coming into some sort of rapport with that world. If you had different nerves, and if you were more accessible to the establishment of such a rapport, your impressions would undoubtedly be clearer and stronger. But because you are dense and because you refuse to believe — eh — then from that rapport into which you have entered with the other world nothing remains in your consciousness except this melancholy feeling. If you would yield and believe in that impression — eh — who knows what you could see, learn, and hear."

The doctor had to laugh heartily at Radičević. And the whole group followed his example. Still the conversation continued in the same vein. Mišić, to be sure, did not undertake to refute Radičević; but the parish priest, the Reverend Lacica Kuntek, developed his views concerning the world of spirits, and a lively debate ensued. At last "illustrissimus" Batorić spoke up. As usual he would not suffer a conversation to drift into jocular channels or to become the mere telling of boresome and impossible stories.

"I do not agree with our Škender, Doctor, but I cannot subscribe to your beliefs either! You merely deny the efficacy of premonitions and prophetic dreams. Experience shows that you are wrong. History itself recognizes dreams that have foretold the future. It recognizes premonitions, too. These facts cannot be denied. You explain your melancholy as a mere remnant of an unpleasant dream which is caused by physiological phenomena. I am willing to interpret your melancholy as a fragment of your dream; but I am convinced that a man's soul finds strength in dreams, that in them it sees the world more clearly and penetratingly than it does in its waking hours. To be sure, it acquires this strength only in the most profound of dreams. It may be that you have such dreams, in which something of the future is revealed to you, something which presages evil for you. It is only on rare occasions that dreams leave complete pictures in one's mind; and when they do, the pictures are usually symbolical. You sleep soundly, and such pictures are obliterated from your

mind. But then one never can tell. Everything is so speculative! Be it as it may, do not be too much alarmed."

"Do not worry, illustrissime," retorted the Doctor, laughing again. "At any rate, I am not going to be frightened by any prophetic dreams. It is possible, however, that I may worry over my nerves and digestion. But I shall try to counteract this by a proper diet."

"All right, then. For that reason the toastmaster must absolve you from the duty of drinking a toast to the Jabučevac ghosts. Mark, Janko, he is not going to drink with us. Hey, Doctor, it is possible that there is some beauty among the ghosts, and then you may regret that we drank to her health, and that you didn't!" joked the old man.

But the Doctor was firm — he did not touch his glass. And when no one had as yet even dreamed of leaving the party, he stole away unobserved and went directly home.

He made his diet even more strict. He cut out his suppers entirely, eating little or nothing before going to bed. This he did because his nervousness and his inner disturbances were growing more and more violent. Together with the inexplicable and groundless melancholy he began to be tortured by a certain indefinable yearning. His soul yearned for something without knowing what, though it seemed to him in a vague way that this something was of an erotic nature. There were moments when he felt in his heart as though he were in love. In his phantasy delicate feminine forms flitted about; and he moved his lips as though to kiss someone. Yet he was positive that none of the neighborhood beauties had ever stirred his imagination.

One night about one o'clock he suddenly awoke from a vivid and clear dream. Immediately he sensed the changed atmosphere, but his whole being was pervaded with the sentiments and feelings that he had received in the dream. For a long time after awaking he thought he noticed a strange odor of carbolic acid. This he could not explain. His supplies were stored in the fifth room from his, and during the preceding day he had not used carbolic acid at all. And he could not clearly recall the presence of carbolic acid in his dream; though it did seem to him that the smell of it was a remembrance from the dream.

He had dreamed that he had entered a small, dark, immeasurably cold room. The walls were gray from humidity and were covered with long green spots. How he had come there he could not clearly recall; and the reason for his coming he was utterly unable to guess. He had to wait till his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness in the room. Then from a small round windowpane, up underneath the eaves, descended a wide beam of pale light. He could not say whether it was the light of the moon or of the sun. The beam fell on one side, illumining the furthermost part of the room. There on the stony pavement lay the body of a young girl. It was impossible for him to say whether she was dead or sleeping, or perhaps

just resting. Then he felt the eyes of the girl fixed upon him. Their gaze was so strange and unusual that he felt uncomfortable and depressed. Yet he could not turn away. Her large eyes were so beautiful and charming, with their calm, penetrating look and long shadowy eyelashes, which seemed covered with a delicate veil, that he could not turn his gaze away from them. The longer he looked the greater was his fascination. And then an immense desire to throw himself on the pavement and to bend down to the girl overcame him. Then something strange happened, something, however, that did not strike him as being strange at all in the dream. Another man came into the room. He looked at him and recognized himself. The newcomer was carrying a knife in his hand. He bent down to the girl and was about to make the customary anatomic incision with which a dissection begins.

"Stop! She is not dead. No! No!" he thundered at the intruder. "Tell me who you are and why you come here when I am here already!"

"You know that our calling is like that of a soldier. Our lives are not our own. I must do my duty."

"But stop! Tell me first, who is this girl? Just look at her! How beautiful she is! Oh, were I ever to love, she would certainly be my choice."

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Don't be a fool!" And then his other self told him rapidly the story of the girl; but the story was utterly incomprehensible to him. Then his other self started to sing an American song. Mišić remembered that he had heard the song once before, in the Anatomy Building in Vienna, from an American colleague who was humming it while dissecting a woman's hand and eating sweets.

"You know English?" he inquired, surprised. But his other self did not answer. Instead, he approached the girl again and lifted the robe that half covered her, and which bore stains of dried blood. Mišić became bewildered — such was the beauty of the body that he beheld! Never in his life had he gazed upon such exquisite loveliness. Only Canova's Psyche could be compared with those delicate, wondrously rounded and uniformly harmonious outlines. The finely shaped head with its luxuriant black hair rested on her left elbow, while her right hand lay on her virginal bosom, underneath her right breast. He could not resist all this magical beauty, despite the fact that he saw his other self suddenly covered all over with blood, as soon as he approached the girl. Now he was alone with the girl, he bent down to her and took her in his arms. He felt a piercing cold surging through his veins, but this did not prevent him from pressing her beautiful body closer to his heart. The girl now threw her arms around his neck and pressed her lips to his. He felt as though her ice-cold kisses were sucking his blood; yet he could not stop. He continued to return her kisses, which seemed to daze him. Suddenly he was no longer in the room. Still locked in her embrace he felt himself being transported somewhere over far-away, boundless waters, sinking deeper into the waves, which ap-

peared thick, yellowish and turbid as the sea when the South wind blows. Immense fright and piercing cold tortured him, yet he still held her in his embrace and returned her kisses. He longed to speak but could not articulate a single word; nor did she utter a syllable. At last he felt such cold that he thought he should freeze. Then he woke up.

The whole dream was stamped vividly on his memory, and he reënacted it mentally. More poignantly than ever he felt his usual spiritual uneasiness. Almost timidly he looked about the room. It lay before him silent and dark. The cabinets and chairs loomed in dim outline, mere round, black objects. Through the window curtains a narrow moonbeam found its way into the room, falling vertically on the center of the floor. The clock on the wall was invisible, but its slow, harsh ticking was audible. The alarm clock on the night cabinet near the bed was producing a loud, unpleasant noise. Mišić turned toward it. The phosphorescent hands and numerals showed that it was ten minutes past one. He turned toward the wall and fell asleep again. Shortly afterwards he woke up. He thought it was morning already — his slumber seemed so long! He looked at the clock. It was only sixteen minutes past one. In his dream the short minutes had seemed like ten hours. He had dreamed again of the same girl. But this time he saw her in the middle of some vast desert plain. She met him with the same rigid look; and as soon as he drew near her she embraced him with both arms, and then began to kiss or rather to suck him.

Against his will and yet with pleasure and delight he gave himself over to her kisses, which were still cold — cold as ice. And suddenly across the vast plain from all sides began to flow filthy puddle water, which surrounded him and the girl. Still he was not afraid, but continued to kiss her and caress her body, beautiful as that of Hebe. And it seemed to him that he was singing to her a mighty dithyramb in which he compared her beautiful form to lilies in a garden, to birds in a forest and to silvery fishes in water. And accompanied by his singing, the lilies, the birds and the fishes swam about her bosom, her neck and shoulders, her finely shaped elbows and her thighs, gliding through the water in luxuriant garlands. The array increased so greatly that an immense quantity of wreaths, of all sorts of prodigious creatures, surrounded both him and her, veering around them, making silvery waves back and forth. And from the scales of the fishes, from the feathers of the birds, from the petals of the flowers and from the waves emanated a peculiar bluish phosphosrescent light, which illumined the farthermost end of the train, where additional golden and red fishes were joining the procession, appearing as so many emeralds, topazes and rubies. "Venus Anadyomene!" he exulted triumphantly amidst the roaring waves, kissing her cold neck and pressing his breast to her bosom; while she, mute and motionless, clung round his neck and continued sucking him with her kisses rather than kissing him. Thereupon he found himself with her upon

a shell as large as a canoe, garlanded with cypress wreaths. Giant fishes and monsters of the deep were pulling the shell on and on, executing graceful voluptuous movements in the water as they proceeded. He did not care, did not ask where he was going. Hours and hours he sailed, always seeing before him imposing coral cliffs, fathomless depths, and beautiful water fauna, with species of flowers such as he had never seen; and all of these were illumined by a magic but melancholy light. Suddenly the shell changed into a wooden vessel. At first he could not tell what kind of a vessel it was, but later he divined that it was a coffin. A sweet, pleasing peace, and a feeling of happiness and indescribable comfort descended upon him, while her body, still more beautiful, still more charming, rested at his side. God knows how long that lasted. He had no means of measuring time, nor did he care to.

All at once the coffin hit a cliff, and, all alone, he fell deeper and deeper into the abyss. An inexplicable fear dominated him, and then he woke up.

He did not fall asleep till morning. He was greatly excited and irritated. At times the opinions expressed by Radičević and Batorić occurred to him. To be sure, he still had enough control over his intellect to resist their influence, yet he felt a certain uneasiness It seemed to him that something was hovering in the air and then stealthily climbing the wall. He thought he could distinguish a very delicate fluttering, at times similar to the vibration of violin strings, at times to the dying chords of a far, far away song or music. And on all sides an invisible hammer seemed to be pounding upon some hard metallic object. The picture of the dream girl was even now floating before his eyes vividly and harmoniously, whether he kept them open or closed. He was still under the spell of her divine beauty. Oh, even now, in his waking moments, how clearly he remembered every line, every feature. Even now his hands move avidly to touch that perfect beauty.

"If I could only find such beauty in real life!" he exclaimed aloud several times. And the thought flashed through his head, why was he not a painter or a sculptor in order to present to the outside world that charming apparition.

Towards morning he fell asleep again. He slept quietly and soundly. It was ten o'clock when he awoke, and the room was filled with daylight. Although he had to go to work at once, since in the corridor and in the antechamber patients were waiting, he could not dismiss his dream from his thoughts. Somehow it perturbed him; and every moment he remembered how Radičević had explained it.

"Bah! What stupidity!" he would interrupt himself, only to recall and ponder upon Batorić's contention. He was acquainted to a certain extent with the philosophy of Schopenhauer, whose theory of dreams was not unknown to him. Of course he would not admit that Batorić was right, but no longer did he retain his former sovereign calm — the calm of the mod-

ern materialist. "After all, no one can tell!" he exclaimed involuntarily, as he wrote out a prescription for a villager who insisted that he was afflicted with some frightful disease.

Yet he still could not escape the picture of the dream girl. He had a number of women patients and he could not help making comparisons between their visible outlines and those that had appeared before him in his dream.

During the rest of the day the image of the beautiful dream creature kept coming back upon his memory. In the evening he did not go to pay his usual visits to his neighbors; instead he went into the garden to take a walk. He hoped that the fresh evening air would soothe and calm him; yet something made him yearn to be alone and to muse on the girl of his dream. The garden was vast and extended far into the hillside. Old fruit trees gave it in places the air of a forest. There were other trees also: tall lindens, birches, firs, and weeping willows; so that immediately after sunset the whole garden was inlaid with deep shadows. The narrow and grass-covered paths could hardly be distinguished. On one side of the garden stood a half-demolished gardener's cottage. From it extended a long but narrow vista of cornel and hazel wood, which led to an artificial hill where a Chinese pavilion lay in complete ruin. The Doctor moved absent-mindedly in that direction. In the gray twilight there loomed up in the distance the round, stupid outline of a Chinese head with a pointed hat, which was placed on the peak of the roof. Mišić could not repress a smile; he then went to the pavilion, from which he hoped to see a beautiful panorama. From there he could see the whole garden and part of the plain that extended toward the brook. It was now growing dark, and the country around presented a disagreeable aspect in the gloomy semi-gray darkness in which objects can still be clearly distinguished, though they lack the charm of the daylight. Here and there a swallow was flying; and bats and June beetles were gliding through the air. Crows and ravens gathered round the tops of the trees, preferring the tall poplars. In the deep, narrow moat, just beneath the pavilion, all covered up with needle-furze, thick weeds, and still thicker briers, something stirred, making a rustling noise. Mišić trembled despite himself, without thinking of anything definite. He was still excessively nervous. Sitting on a broken bench in the pavilion, he was driven to think of his dream and particularly of the girl whom he had beheld in it.

"If she were only alive — here — in the garden — before me — little Mignon!" he mused tenderly, recalling to his mind the charming little creature that Goethe's genius had created. He felt as though his dream girl were a similar mysterious being from some far-away land.

"But from where?" he asked himself audibly, at the same time convinced of the foolishness of the question. Still some strange and mystic power took possession of him, and instantly he believed in his heart that

his dream girl really lived, and that there was some connection between her and him. He gazed into the distance. Suddenly he thought he heard something stir and hover over the bushes, down in the remotest corner of the chasm. He grew rigid and he felt shudders running through his whole body.

"Oh, I must be ill. My nerves are completely shattered. It is because of them that all this nonsense is happening to me," he was saying to himself; and at the same time he fancied he saw a shadow flash by him — or what was it! He looked around. Everything was still, calm, in deathlike silence. Not a leaf on the nearby trees rustled. Only up above, far, far away in the air, a bird was flying leisurely toward the west; but because of the semi-darkness he could not recognize it. The Doctor left the pavilion in ill humor and distractedly descended the path of hazel and cornel wood. There everything was quiet and calm — only here and there some belated thrush or squirrel was arranging its bed among the thickly interwoven branches of the trees. In this stillness the doctor, despite his desire and his fixed purpose to think of nothing except his patients, again recalled to his mind the girl from his dream. And in a moment he fell into a reverie. He saw his beauty in various circumstances, romantic or commonplace, but always clearly and distinctly as he had done in his dream. There were moments when he saw not only parts of the phantom or a vaguely outlined whole, as is usual in reverie, but her entire body clearly outlined — all he had to do was to touch her with his finger tips. Then his heart was filled with tenderness. For a moment he gazed at the form of his imagination, if we may call it such, and then felt a great yearning to behold her alive, now, before him. He was dominated by an enthusiasm for the beauty that he beheld in his thoughts. Never had his æsthetic instinct been awakened and satisfied as it now was by this elusive phantom of his fancy. He admired her beautiful oval face and luxuriant, lusterless black tresses, her perfectly moulded shoulders and her delicate virginal bosom; and then her graceful waist with the charmingly curved lines from her back to her thighs, and then those marvelous limbs, so well rounded and yet so delicately fashioned. Oh, he was aflame, trembling with passion — forgetting that it was all merely his imagination, not reality.

Complete darkness had come on. No objects could be perceived in the woods. He turned back to the pavilion. As soon as he arrived there his former fear returned. Timidly he looked around him several times. The immense stillness of the evening grew more and more intense about him. All around reigned a most profound silence. Not even a cricket in the grass could be heard chirping. The doctor could almost hear the beating of the blood in his temples.

All at once he thought he heard a whisper or a hiss behind him. He turned around, but could see nothing. The moon had just risen above the

forest and a faint beam illumined the pavilion and its Chinese head, the face of which seemed to radiate mockery and malice. In a moment the moonlight spread over everything. The sky was no longer gray, but dark blue, with only a few stars twinkling. Near the moon floated a dark round cloud. The edge which was nearer the moon seemed aflame with a brilliant golden fire. The Doctor glanced at the cloud and then relapsed into his musing. He was awakened by a louder hissing or whispering. He was convinced that he had heard his name spoken. He jumped from the bench; and his eyes rested on the ravine near the moat. Unquestionably he could see some object down there. He thought it was the same apparition that he had seen in his dream. It seemed to him that she was motioning to him with her hand. Her face he could not clearly distinguish, yet he thought that it was sad and unhappy and that she was invoking his aid.

He stepped forward, but immediately regained his senses. "Oh, I must be insane. It is my accursed nerves again!" he moaned desperately, clasping his burning forehead with both his hands. He could feel the blood surging through his veins.

With hasty steps he left the pavilion, but ashamed of himself he turned toward the moat. Across the tall, dewy grass he descended to the place where he had seen the apparition. A frog leaped from beneath his feet. He started. When he arrived there everything was as usual. A lilac in full bloom, flooded with the moonlight, solved the riddle of the apparition.

"So that's what it was!" he cried triumphantly. And then and there he decided to take a cold shower before going to bed that night.

That night he did not dream. He slept soundly. When he woke up in the morning the sun was high in the heavens. His usual melancholy had also disappeared.

"Eureka!" he exulted, ascribing his success to the cold shower. Immediately he decided to adopt that mode of treatment. "I was right. Everything was due to my shattered nerves!" But after dinner he was actually depressed because he had not dreamed of the beautiful girl. A pleasing and irresistible wish to see her — were it only in his dreams — took possession of his soul. When he realized that if his dreams ceased her image would disappear forever from his heart, he felt as if he had lost a very dear friend.

Eight days passed and the dream did not recur. The doctor almost regretted the fact. He had not ascribed to the dream any fatal significance, anyhow, and his desire to see the lovely girl again was overwhelming. If he could only see such marvelous perfection once more! Until now he had told no one of his dreams. Some force that he himself could not have explained, restrained him. When he thought that everything was over, he related the whole dream to a group of people at a supper party given by Batorić in Brezovica. Enthusiastically he described the beauty of the dream girl.

"*Fine finaliter*," he jokingly imitated the mode of conversation of his neighbors, "there are qualities of a painter or a sculptor hidden in me. And yet, behold, I am only a doctor! Really I have missed my true calling," concluded the Doctor in a jocular tone.

Magnificus Radičević only shook his head and requested that the Doctor repeat the incident of the garden.

"But I am telling you, it was only my nerves. All that sort of thing comes from excitability," explained Mišić.

"Yes, yes, you are right," interrupted illustrissimus Batorić. "I should say that the incident in the garden was due to your nerves; but your dream was an entirely different matter. You know the verses of our old Horace, *Post mediam noctem, cum somnia vera*. And do not forget that the old Latins were a brainy lot, and that they always hit upon the truth. *Ad proposita*, they had a wonderful book. A certain Artemidorus wrote it and called it, I believe, *Ankirokritikon*. As a young man once I had it in my hands. It belonged to my godfather, the old Count Keglević. If you could get hold of it, clarissime, and read it, perhaps it would give you the key to your dream."

The Doctor only smiled; and throughout the supper he kept to his strict diet, despite numerous temptations to violate it.

A few nights later he dreamed the same dream. Again he saw the same beautiful body of the girl. This time he dreamed that he was still a student at the University of Vienna, and in the Anatomy Building. The attendant told him that he had a whole corpse at his disposal; and added that it was through his, the attendant's, good offices that the body was obtained; and that consequently he deserved a tip, as the other students were envious of Mišić's good luck. "Watch out, Doctor, that something doesn't happen to you. You might lose your head over her, she is so beautiful," the attendant said to him. When he stepped to the dissecting board, he saw her entirely naked. He recognized her, but could not remember where he had seen her. Enchanted by her beauty, it was long before he could bring himself to use his knife. He felt distressed at the prospect of cutting out of so perfect a form the breast which was to afford him material for his chapter on anatomy. He could not see his way clear to proceed.

He suddenly became unable to move. His hands and feet seemed petrified. His eyes bulged out; and then everything went blank. From an awesome distance he heard certain Latin conversations of which he could understand neither the content nor the purpose. He knew only that it was Latin and that it tortured and pained him seriously. In one word, he was terrified. Affrighted, he woke up. He looked at the phosphorescent clock. It indicated ten minutes past one.

"*Post mediam noctem, cum somnia vera*," were his first horrified words. And again he felt the usual melancholy and uneasiness.

"To see her in such a terrible condition! my little beauty!" he whis-

pered almost sorrowfully. "And really may there not be something behind all this? What does this incessant renewal of the same apparition mean? Finally, why does the situation always develop in the same fashion? Why is it that my feelings are wrought up to so high a pitch by a mere apparition in a dream — by a mere phantom of my imagination? Is it not strange that a creature of my fancy should enchant me far more than a real woman ever has done?" the Doctor asked himself. He did not wish to invoke the aid of his intellect or of the postulates of his science. Instead, with an absorbed delight, he gave himself over to these meditations, deriving a great joy from fancying that the marvelous girl was not an ephemeral creation of his imagination, but a real being, no matter of what sort.

"But why do I always dream of her in such horrifying circumstances?" he would interrupt himself in his leisurely meditations. And in his heart there would settle a chill like that of a serpent; and he would relapse into his melancholy attitude.

From that night on, his dreadful dreams recurred frequently, and he always saw the same girl, and always in some frightful situation. And after every such dream he would wake up terribly frightened. If he slept through without waking up, the morning would still bring him the usual melancholy and oppressive feeling, and he would have a premonition of something terrible.

But besides these gruesome dreams he had still more frequently erotic dreams, in which he always had to deal with the fair girlish phantom. He had numberless trysts in unknown places, and these trysts were filled with such extraordinary dramatic incidents as he had never — so far as he knew — experienced in real life. Scenes occurred in which most ardent declarations of love took place; and again others in which torturing jealousy held sway. Frequently he saw himself in a dual rôle. And his two selves clashed in jealous encounters. But the girl he always beheld in her perfect beauty, always veiled with the poesy of sadness and misfortune.

These dreams became so dear to him that he truly yearned for them. In order to insure her appearance during the night, he would force himself in the evening to think of her as intensely as possible. But presently he noticed that just at those times when he had mused on the phantom especially long and earnestly he would not dream of her. He never discussed his dreams with any one. He even sought to avoid such discussions. Whenever Radičević or Batorić asked him any questions concerning his experiences he would merely shake his head or smile and at once divert the conversation into some other channel. He himself did not know what to think of the whole affair. He ardently desired, however, that the image of the girl should forever remain fixed in his memory. As a boy he had studied drawing and he now attempted to draw the figure of his apparition, but after a quarter of an hour he had to throw away his pencil. He contrived an-

other means. He started a diary, and in it he accurately noted every dream.

One evening, exhausted by the hard work of the day, he went to bed a trifle earlier than usual. Outside a storm was brewing. It was thundering in the distance and the moonlit sky was covered with black clouds. Here and there a jagged thunderbolt flashed. The Doctor, thinking of his nervousness and fearing that the thunder and lightning might interfere with his sleep, got up, lowered the Venetian blinds and closed the shutters.

It was not long before he fell asleep. He dreamed that he was sleeping there in his bed, from which he could barely distinguish the objects in the dark room, and see through the narrow slits of the shutters the bluish flashing of lightning. His man-servant entered the neighboring room with a half-burned candle in his hand. He saw him open the cupboard and remove from it a bottle of his finest cognac, tuck it under his arm, and then tiptoe out of the room. The Doctor, still in his bed, saw him in the corridor, then on the ground floor, and then entering his own room, where a group of men and women were waiting for him. Mišić did not care to follow the servant any longer, nor did he marvel in the least at his ability to see everything from his bed. His glance now wandered outside, and he saw rain pouring down heavily. There on the street he saw a carriage — perhaps a farmer's — going at a dizzy pace. He could see still farther, much farther, God knows how far. Then he saw on a wide public road a lonely structure, which was low but long. Immediately he guessed that it was a tavern. In front of the house stood a crowd of men who looked like carters; and inside a large smoky room was filled with carters, farmers, and nondescripts. A corpulent tavern keeper and his thin wife, who was as dirty as the maid, a young Carinthian girl, were making their way among the customers, continually passing wine, cigars, and whiskey. In the corner, near the stove, sat a lone man, stooping over. He wore a long overcoat that reached to the ground. The raiment was so worn out that it was impossible to tell its original color. On his knees rested a violin. His long curly hair fell over his dark, wearied, and weatherbeaten face, which was of an unusual sallow color. His wretched face was overgrown with a long black beard; and as his head was bowed deeply, his unkempt beard fell half-way down his breast. Upon someone's motioning or calling to him, he adjusted the violin, stood up, and began to play. Long, sorrowful chords swelled through the room and then gradually, with a gentle, moaning tremolo, died away amid the uproar of drunken voices. The musician now turned toward someone and motioned sadly with his head. Then from somewhere — from behind a cabinet in the corner, it seemed — appeared a young girl in a short pink circus dress with blue ribbons. She placed herself near the fiddler, with her face turned toward him, and began to sing. It was a beautifully soft, divine voice. It started gently, very gently, then with a mighty crescendo swelled into an enchanting melody of now deli-

cate, now strong notes, and finally in a profound sigh died away with magic sweetness.

Dr. Mišić understood neither the words nor the song, nor did he recognize the melody; he only knew that he was listening to something that he had never heard before, so beautiful, so majestic, so perfect was her singing. He could not see the face of the singer. But when, toward the end of the song, the drunken rabble began to clamor and shout that they did not want any of those sad, goody-goody songs, but that instead the "gipsy" should sing a gay song, one of "ours," the girl turned toward the "audience." Her oval face almost morbidly pale, her large dark eyes, her luxuriant black tresses, her delicate swan-like neck, her whole being, assured him that she was the stranger from his dreams. He was dreadfully depressed and sad because he could not get up from his bed. Ah! she appeared far more beautiful now than ever before! Even now her face was veiled with a sort of inexplicable sadness and her eyes had a certain melancholy look; but from her whole being emanated fresh youthfulness. Ah! she was so charming, so wonderful in her timid, frightened, almost childlike attitude, with her soft smiles and the bewildered look in her tearful eyes, shaded with their long eyelashes! Again she sang, and again her song thrilled with a sad resonance still more heartrending than before. While she sang silence reigned everywhere. The most drunken drivers propped their unsteady heads with their elbows and listened with open mouths. Others, who were still able to stand on their feet, stepped nearer and encircled the singer, gazed stupidly at her, and despite their befogged brains, nodded in approval and dried their tears. When the last notes had ceased to vibrate, a voice rose in the opposite corner: "Hey, I don't want any more of those wailing songs; they give me a pain in my breast, my throat. Sing us something jolly, witch!" And a huge tramp jumped from his seat like a mad lynx, breaking all the glasses around him, and staggered drunkenly toward the musician.

"Sing us something jolly!" echoed others, and like a ball they rolled toward the wretched fiddler.

"Lay off, you filthy dogs! Let her be! Let her sing as she has been singing! It is beautiful! What do you want here anyway! Sing on!" protested those who had gathered around the singer.

"No, no!" and it became pandemonium as fists swung furiously. The poor fiddler's violin was smashed to pieces. Dejectedly he seized the girl by the arm and made for the door. At that moment a bottle whizzed through the air and hit the girl right on her temple. She fell down, a crumpled mass, without uttering a single sound. Dr. Mišić, terrified, emitted a piercing cry — and then awoke.

He was so excited that he could not close his eyes again. — "Whence these terrible, strange pictures?" he asked himself frantically, suspecting that they might be the first symptoms of insanity. "And how clear it all

was, how vivid and distinctly outlined, just like an experience of real life. This time there was not a single fantastic motif. An absolute fact! I can hardly believe that it was only a dream. It was as though I were viewing a scene from real life! Something serious is the matter with me. I shall have to go to Vienna, for observation by the professors. Oh, it would be horrible if I were to go insane!"

And he fell into a black despair. He decided firmly not to indulge in any fanciful meditations about the bewitching beauty of the girl. "Such meditations cause my dreams; these with their deceitful reality go quite beyond the true nature of dreams and are manifestations of a deranged spirit. Ugh! . . . ." He could lie in bed no longer. He got up and paced nervously up and down the room in his night-shirt. Then obeying a mysterious impulse he went into the neighboring room and opened the cupboard. His glance fell upon the cognac shelf. He was absolutely astounded and had to draw back a step or two. The very bottle of which he had dreamed had disappeared. The first thing he did was to walk towards the servant's room; he did not mind the theft, but he wanted to get to the bottom of this affair. From the corridor he could hear the drunken song that issued from the servants' quarters on the ground floor. He had dreamed of that, too. A feeling of amazement descended upon him. Almost frightened, he went downstairs. On the first step it occurred to him: "Oh, I heard the drunken song through my sleep, and that is how my dream created the picture that I saw!" And he slapped his forehead, smiled reassuringly and returned to his room. "Ultimately, or rather *fine finaliter*, chances are that I shall become another magnificus Škender."

Passing the cupboard he remembered the cognac. "Oh, that's a mere trifle, — just a coincidence. Perhaps I noticed yesterday that the bottle wasn't there and then never gave it another thought till I saw the scene in my dream."

He then went to bed, calmed.

The next day at noon, just as he was finishing his work in the office, a messenger came from the district court. He bore an official summons ordering the doctor to appear at the courthouse to join a commission of experts that was to investigate a case of murder that had occurred somewhere in a distant town on the boundary of the district. Ordinarily the Doctor would have received such a summons with indifference. This time, however, he immediately thought of his dream. "There was some truth in it," he whispered as he perused the document. But immediately he called himself a fool. "With my excitability I am growing almost childish." And he really was excited. The dream, a sleepless night, and his tense condition, which had existed for a whole week, all contributed to make him more nervous than usual.

His hands fairly trembled as he was packing in his case the instruments

necessary for a dissection. Three times he had to return from his carriage to the office to get things that he had forgotten and that were indispensable.

When he reached the courthouse the commission was gone. The judge, with a clerk and an older doctor, had left early in order to reach the morgue as soon as possible. Word had been left for him to follow them.

It was a hot August afternoon. All along the road the carriage raised veritable clouds of thick, yellowish dust. The air was heavy and oppressive and prevented free breathing. Mišić was impatient to reach his destination and to escape the inconveniences of the drive; and yet whenever he thought of arriving there, an inexplicable fear and terror took possession of him. He was utterly unable to explain his state of mind. But the strange similarity between his dream and the case upon which he was called to officiate constantly preyed upon his subconsciousness.

"After all . . . . .; oh . . . . . who could believe it for a single moment! Nothing! Nothing! At any rate such things are dangerous — they trouble our brains. One thing only is clear to me — a man can never escape superstition!" the Doctor reflected, attempting to drive away his thoughts.

The ride lasted about two hours. The town constable who awaited the Doctor's arrival took him to the morgue in the cemetery, where the investigating commission was already at work. There he found a great many people gathered round the table that stood outside the morgue. At the table sat a clerk who was taking down the testimony of witnesses. The Doctor threw only a hurried glance at the crowd. Strangely enough it seemed to him that all the faces there were familiar to him. However, he did not have time to ponder over that. The judge stepped up to him immediately and, indicating the door of the morgue, asked him to perform the autopsy while he was examining the witnesses.

"Murder — a gipsy murdered. Go ahead, Doctor, and finish up everything; then you can dictate your report. Let's not waste too much time. You, as the junior Doctor, will do the dissecting. Isn't that so, my dear Dr. Aschbayer?"

"Quite so, quite so. My respected colleague may proceed," retorted the senior Doctor, a man of advanced years and extraordinary obesity. "I've had plenty of that sort of thing. And I have a headache — I could not stand it inside. I will sign everything you wish. In the meanwhile I am going to the village to see if I can find a glass of good wine. — Undoubtedly, colleague, you can do everything necessary without my aid. Anyhow, it is a very clear case — a fatal blow on the left temple, I think; and the skull is broken above the ear. Yes, yes, a clear case. Then . . . I'll see you again! I shall return before you've finished the dissecting. Your Honor has nothing against my departure!"

And the old Doctor rolled out of the crowd, and with his goose step descended to the village.

Dr. Mišić prepared his instruments, ordered water to be brought to the

morgue and, accompanied by the constable and the sexton, went inside. The beam of light that entered through a small window above the door dimly illumined the scene. The place was narrow, and the walls were black and green from humidity. The air inside was musty. There was a slightly perceptible odor of a corpse. In the center stood a crude, clumsy table; and on it lay a body which was covered with a long soiled robe in such a way that no part of it could be seen — only a pair of dusty and much-worn shoes protruded from the lower end. The upper end of the robe, near the head, was bloodstained.

Dr. Mišić felt his usual composure deserting him. Continually his dream of last night kept coming back to his mind; and now, seeing the morgue and the bloodstains, he recalled his other dreams also.

"If under this robe lay . . . she! Oh, that would be too horrible!" he said to himself, suffering more from the thought that she was dead than from the presentiment that his dream was true. His feelings were like those of a lover who fears for the life of his belovèd. On similar occasions he himself would have undertaken to undress the corpse, for he was anxious not to let the awkward hands of untrained villagers touch the rigid limbs of the dead body. Now was he either unwilling or unable to follow his customary procedure. Instead he ordered the sexton to do the undressing. For his own part he turned toward the door, looked outside, and listened to the questions of the judge and the answers of the witnesses.

"I could not tell exactly how many of us there were; no one could. Yes, the room was filled with people," answered a voice. "All of a sudden a noise and a cry arose and the young people began to fight. Who can tell how and why! The devil himself seemed to be mixed up in it. The crowd was drunk; and it would be impossible to tell who struck the blow. I did not — I could swear it on the Crucifix — I never touched anybody — I did not."

"Oh — Oh!" wailed a shrill voice on the side, "you all are guilty. Oh God! to kill such a child! They've taken away my only support. Oh, wretched old me! Where shall I turn now? Please, please, illustrious, merciful court, arrest all of them; and make them pay me, pay me plenty. My poor, hapless child! They killed her as they would a cat. Oh! They broke my violin, too — my old Italian violin! No concert player ever had a better one!"

The voice somehow sounded familiar to Mišić, and he wanted to go out and see the wailing old man; but something held him back and he remained in his place.

"We have finished," announced the sexton and the constable behind his back. The Doctor started, and avoiding any glance at the table, withdrew from the door and bent over his instrument case. Outside, the wailing of the old man grew louder and louder. Although there was nothing to select, the Doctor remained bent over for a long time, picking and choosing among the knives, scissors and lancets.

"Daylight won't last forever," remarked the sexton, to remind the Doctor that it was about time to start.

Mišić bent over with a sigh, then with a supreme effort he stepped to the table, still forbearing to look in the direction of the corpse.

"Bah! What stupid thoughts are entering my mind! I am not Radičević!" he mumbled angrily, drawing very close to the table.

"Yes, it is . . . it is she!" he ejaculated almost aloud, drawing back two paces. His arms fell to his sides, and his right hand clasped the blade of the knife, so that he felt a twinge of pain. On the table lay the body of a beautiful young girl. Her soft and delicate face, wearing a frightened and suffering expression, seemed to gaze at the doctor, and her large dark eyes were wide open. On her long eyelashes and thick brows some dust had gathered. Her black luxuriant tresses fell in disorder over the table to the floor. Above her left ear a quantity of dried blood had transformed one lock into a hard ball.

"No, no, it cannot be she!" the Doctor stammered to himself, after a long pause. "It must be a hallucination, as it was in the garden when I took a blossoming lilac for a girl. My nerves, my nerves!" and he grasped his forehead.

But the longer he gazed the surer he was that the body was identical with the one that he had seen in his dreams.

"There is no doubt — the same lines — the same face that I have seen so many times in my dreams. It is she. It is she!" he moaned pitiably and his heart was afflicted by a great pain and a boundless sorrow, and his eyes were moist with tears.

"It is she!" he whispered hoarsely, scarcely able to breathe, and gazing at her beautiful form, which was just slightly rigid and not yet entirely suffused with the paleness of death. He recognized every line. There was the same insignificant black scar above the right thigh. Even her right hand lay near her right breast, as he had seen it in the first dream. He trembled and felt a great fear. It seemed as though a fatal, mysterious cloud were hovering over him, enveloping him in the terrible shadow of the world beyond where human intelligence is powerless.

"Then dreams do not lie," he spoke aloud, without paying any attention to the two men present. "It is the same body, and in exactly the same circumstances as in my dream. And then the witness said that there was a scuffle. But no! All this may be a mere coincidence. Perhaps I do not see clearly. Sick nerves! I always dream the same apparition, and now I see it everywhere. But . . ." He interrupted himself and jumped feverishly toward the sexton, and asked him to describe the body. The sexton eyed him suspiciously, then distorted his mouth with a stupid laugh, turned toward the constable and scratched his head above his ear.

"But, can't you see her, doctor? Hm . . . She is beautiful. It's a pity she got killed. A mere child."

"But tell me what kind of hair she has! Is her body stout? Is it? . . . Speak up!"

"For God's sake, Doctor, she has black hair. And her body . . . how could I describe it? . . . She is young and beautiful. . . . She is not fat."

"Is there a scar above her thigh?"

"Yes, of course, there is. How can you doubt it? There, see it!"

"Then I saw all right!" the Doctor said to himself. "It is she. It is she!"

And he no longer thought of his dream. He merely gazed upon the beautiful body. He suddenly felt a need of being alone; and almost rudely he ordered the sexton and the constable to leave the room.

Now he directed a long, long glance upon the dead girl. The beauty of her graceful figure again rose before his eyes, as in his dreams. An enormous sorrow, a saintly pity, and a black despair filled his soul. "How beautiful, how wonderful she is! By her beauty she deserves naught but happiness. But now, alas, there she lies, a dead body! Why could not the fates have been kinder to her?" And in his mind he delved into the history of the poor vagabond songstress, whose destiny was not satisfied with her wretched life on the street, and with her continuous contact with poverty, sin, and grief, but had to punish her with so cruel and so early a death! The doctor trembled with horror. Then his erotic dreams arose in his memory. It seemed to him that they were real; and that like a lover he was standing before the corpse of his belovèd, bewailing her loss. He cursed Fate for playing such a cruel trick upon him. The girl had conquered his heart and soul, and yet in real life he was permitted to behold merely her dead body. An immense, tender affection pervaded his whole being, and he felt a desire to press his lips against those of the corpse. Fantastic thoughts flitted through his brain; and in a strange ecstasy he began to whisper to her that she belonged to him, that she was destined for him, and that his obstinate dreaming of her was not a mere trifle.

"Yes, yes, between our souls there existed a communion through which they overcame all physical obstacles and found each other. She is mine! She is mine!"

He bent down to her and kissed her cold lips. At first the unpleasant cold touch and the repelling odor terrified him. But after again beholding her magnificent and delicate beauty, his former ecstacy and affection returned, and he felt quite ashamed of himself for yielding even for a moment to a feeling of repulsion for his belovèd, though she was dead. And again he began to kiss the corpse but not only on her face; he showered with kisses her tresses, her neck, her bosom, and her hands. When he came to himself he started up and freed himself from the strange embrace. His soul was now possessed by a terrific, indescribable pain. The whole tragedy of that wasted young life, so beautiful and marvelous, as well as the still greater tragedy of his own heart and soul, became apparent to him. He wept bitterly. Profuse tears rolled down his face, which was distorted and quivering with pain.

It was a terrible, terrible moment for him!

"Well, doctor, have you started?" asked the judge from the entrance. "I've finished the chief part of my work."

And he began to recite the findings concerning the murder. It was the same act of which the doctor had dreamed. The judge was followed by the father of the murdered girl. The doctor could not help shivering again when he saw him. He was of almost exactly the same appearance as the musician of the dream.

"What is the matter with you, doctor? You look pale! You look . . ." remarked the judge upon seeing the changed and agitated appearance of the doctor.

"Nothing — nothing. — It is long since I have done any dissecting."

"If you feel ill, I will send for Dr. Aschbayer. He is old, it is true, but still if it is necessary he will have to perform the dissection."

"No, no!" exclaimed the doctor. The idea of someone else dissecting her body horrified him. "I must do it. — Let me perform at least this service for her," he said to himself, almost insanely.

The old musician in the meanwhile had slunk into a corner, where he continually groaned and cried. He was bewailing the loss of his child and his violin. The judge wanted to send him out, but he raised his hand and begged that he be allowed to remain inside. The doctor, however, would not agree; but requested that everybody leave the room, with the exception of the sexton, whom he needed to hold the vessel of water.

Now he was alone. With a great moral effort he attempted to be calm. And in fact he was quite steady while he removed his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and once more took hold of his instruments.

But, alas, the first incision across her forehead caused him frightful moral suffering. That fine soft forehead, that delicate face which had captivated him with its beauty and charm in those wondrously sweet dreams, he had now to destroy. And after he had cut the skin and was ready to saw off the cranium, he had to stop for a moment and go out for a breath of fresh air.

Despite all his efforts he was unable to conquer himself. His whole body was quivering from excitement, severe suffering, and sorrow. It was only his unusual skill as a surgeon that enabled him to continue the dissection. But when he was about to cut open her breast and abdomen his forces began to desert him, and the incision that he made was not the proper one. He was perspiring profusely all over his forehead and his body. He could hardly distinguish objects before him. After he had removed her heart he felt a terrific pain. A dizziness descended upon him. Then he reeled and fell helpless over the corpse, his arms crossed.

"For God's sake, doctor, be careful that you do not cut yourself," exclaimed the sexton, observing that the knife in the doctor's right hand had plunged into him somewhere under his left shoulder. The doctor did not

hear him. Dazed, almost senseless, he arose in a moment and continued his work unconsciously, almost mechanically.

Never in his life had it taken him so long to perform an autopsy. When he had finished he went out and called the clerk to take down his report. At first his voice shook slightly, but gradually he regained his self-control, and when Dr. Aschbayer arrived, Mišić was dictating in a firm and sure voice.

While signing the report a drop of blood suddenly fell on the paper from underneath his sleeve.

"What is that?" queried Dr. Aschbayer in surprise.

"I don't know," replied Mišić. "I washed myself well. I have no idea where the blood comes from."

"But, good God, is it possible that you have cut yourself? God, that would be terrible!"

"I do not remember having done so," answered Mišić, fairly alarmed.

"Yes you did — there — the blood is still dripping. Oh, good God Almighty, you have poisoned yourself!" and the old doctor quickly took off Mišić's coat and rolled up his shirt sleeve. On the left upper arm, quite near the shoulder, there appeared a slight cut of some length.

"Alas, how did it happen? — so high? It would be bad enough if it were on your hands, your fingers, but so high! How in thunder could you reach so high with your knife? It is almost impossible for one to cut himself there."

The sexton observed that he had seen the knife rip into the doctor's shoulder when he swooned and fell down.

"And you, man alive, you did not say anything? Fool — fool, don't you know that this is not an ordinary wound, but poison, death, unless there is immediate treatment! And it is almost two hours now since this happened," lamented Aschbayer.

Then he proceeded to search Mišić's case for materials used in rendering first aid on such occasions. But his search revealed the fact that there was no alcohol, or caustic, or nitric acid — in short that there was nothing. In his confusion at the time of leaving, Mišić had forgotten the small case in which he kept such things.

"God, what shall we do now?" cried the old man; while Mišić stood motionless, as if petrified. "And it is too late to suck the wound, too late!"

"Too late!" echoed Mišić, speaking in a hoarse and solemn voice, more to himself than to others. He felt as though he were under the influence of some mighty and absolute law which functioned mercilessly and against whose will there could be no struggle, no recourse. The meaning of his dream now dawned upon him.

"This is then what the rigid body, the coffin, the drowning in the frightful stream, and the bloodsucking kisses of the girl in my dream portended. Death was awaiting me — hence my melancholy. In my dream my soul

foresaw everything. It was fated to be!" Mišić whispered to himself without observing or caring what was happening about him. His whole being was pervaded by an immense apathy. He was convinced that the whole life of man, even in its most minute details, was nothing but an uninterrupted series of absolutely preordained events. Now he understood how his soul, weeks and weeks ahead of time, could presage what was going to happen. At this moment he felt and perceived its mystic nature. His mechanical and chemical understanding of the universe and of himself came to naught, and in his soul he felt that there was something else besides the mere physiological processes of the human brain. This new understanding was not a disappointment to him. On the contrary he felt bigger and stronger, and the thought of dying did not terrify him. He fell into a sort of mystic ecstasy which lifted his spirit and made him believe that death was not the end but the beginning of progress towards true perfection. And here he thought of the dead girl. A warm, ardent belief that he should see her again entered into his heart.

"We must hurry home," Dr. Aschbayer aroused him from his meditation. "From there we'll send immediately to Zagreb for doctors. The need is great — you know it best — what is the use concealing it. You know yourself what the poison of a corpse means. Your arm will have to be amputated at the shoulder. That's your only salvation."

"You think so? Hm . . . I don't know," retorted Mišić, thinking of his dream. But he made no further remarks. At home he made no objection to the sending of a carriage to Zagreb for a famous surgeon. He did not seem to care about anything.

That night he lapsed into a fever; his poisoned wound was inflamed. At first the inflammation had only reached the joint of the shoulder. But the next morning when the surgeon and his assistant arrived, the whole shoulder was inflamed. There was no doubt that his blood was poisoned. Amputation would have been purposeless now.

"Medical science is powerless here. Send for a priest. Telegraph his relatives," the surgeon said to Aschbayer; and after receiving his fee he hurried back to the city, where urgent cases were awaiting him.

Mišić passed from one fever into another. Very seldom did he regain consciousness. The pain increased with great speed and unabated fury. He was delirious. And in his fevered mind he was carrying on a happy love affair with the hapless girl. He lived through days, months, years, of an idyllic love. Nay, it was a veritable eternity that he lived through during a few short hours.

When the physical end approached, he regained consciousness. A bright summer sun was flooding the room. Near the bed sat Dr. Aschbayer and old Batorić.

"Truly I am not sorry to go," continued the doomed man. He told the truth. He felt elated and far, far away from everything that surrounded

him. He was unable to understand how it was possible for him to have any love for his recent life or to see any sense in it. So strange, so distant and indifferent was everything worldly to him now. Not even the golden sunbeams moved him, nor did he for a moment regret that in a short time he should be deprived of their brilliancy forever.

Suddenly his mind became unusually clear. Every thought that came to him appeared clear and exact, without any ambiguity and doubt. And his thoughts flowed with a rapidity in comparison with which electricity is nothing. Almost all his knowledge passed before his mind with such accuracy, clearness, and completeness as never before. He remembered long-forgotten things from his primary school, every page of the books he had studied — as if he were studying them now. Then he felt a strange change in his inner being. His whole life from his early childhood was now revealed to him. The most insignificant things, trifles, the playthings of his childhood, senseless jokes, and incidents — all passed before him. And it was not as though he were forming pictures, visualizing the incidents — it seemed to him that he was living his past life all over again. He was unaware of any physical measure of time and space and he saw no difference between the realities of his past life and his fateful dream. That also was present to him and he viewed it with the same sensations. Then a sweet, resplendent enchantment took possession of his soul and the wondrous figure of the young girl stood before him.

"All things with which our souls commune are real for us. And now I am able to see that such things alone are truly ours. They do not leave us even at the time of our death!" he spoke aloud, interrupting his thoughts.

"Oh, how my blood burns!" He straightened himself in his anguish, wishing to change his position. But his strength failed him and his head sank into the pillow.

He was dead.

Czechoslovakia

INTRODUCTION

BEFORE the middle of the Nineteenth Century there is very little fiction to be found in Czech literature, though the history of that literature begins before the days of Bohemia's first great writer, John Huss, who was born about 1360.

Early in the last century the schoolmaster Josef Jungmann compiled a dictionary of the Czech language, and for several years persevered in the work of encouraging his people to make use of their own language and literary traditions, which had for political reasons, during two centuries, become almost extinct under the Austrian domination. Among the earliest writers to take advantage of Jungmann's work were Bozena Nemcova (1820–1862), and Karolina Svetla (1830–1899), women novelists; and Jan Neruda (1834–1891), novelist and short story writer. A little later came Ignat Herrmann, who was for a long time a commanding figure in Bohemian literature.

During the past half-century the Czechs have developed, in spite of their natural bias toward nationalism, several brilliant fiction writers, of whom the best-known are Cech, Winter, and Jirasek.

IGNAT HERRMANN

(1854–   )

HERRMANN'S life reads, as one critic says, like an "American biography." He began as a baker's apprentice, and became in turn traveling salesman, law clerk, bank clerk, reporter, and newspaper editor.

His novels and stories are for the most part carefully observed and accurately described records of the life he knew at first-hand. Besides writing an imposing array of novels and a number of volumes of stories and tales, for over thirty years he edited a well-known humorous magazine.

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CHILDLESS

IVAN HRON had been married for ten years; he had a beautiful wife and was rich. Even his most intimate friends said, not without a touch of envy, that he had "a first-rate berth." They might indeed envy him, for Ivan Hron seemed a spoilt child of fortune. When he had left school, he had entered the university to study law, in order to take his degree. This he did chiefly because his father, a well-to-do tradesman in the country, wished it; he wanted his son to rise in the world. And the son did as his father wished and went to college. But he did not finish his university career. As a young hothead he had been mixed up in some political propaganda; the affair had at first earned him several weeks' arrest, then he was sent down. Although his indiscretion had been of a purely political character, the academic senate wished to keep the reputation of the university unstained, and parted for good with the ill-advised youth. This outcome of his folly had so roused his father's anger that he ordered him out of the house and disinherited him. These things will happen! For whom does a father work and worry from morning till night, if not for his children? What right had a foolish boy, dependent on his father, to spoil his whole future by one careless act?

That Ivan Hron had spoilt his, was his father's firm conviction, and he succeeded in convincing his mother too. With this conviction old Hron died.

And Ivan? When he was in these desperate straits, he knocked at the doors of a Great Bank where clerks were wanted. He obtained work, and dedicated his mind and body to the concern for the salary of thirty florins. It was not long before his superiors found out that he had not wasted his time at the public school where he had spent the greater part of his life, nor during the two years at the university when studying law. Evidently he had after all not entirely spoilt his future outlook. His immediate superiors recommended him to the higher authorities as an eminently "useful" young man, and Ivan Hron got preferment. But his humbler colleagues had no idea of the surprise which was in store for them when after a few years the general manager died. While the cashiers, head clerks, accountants, and other employees, formerly of a very superior rank to Hron's, remained at their desks or marble counters, Ivan, who had assisted very successfully in some important transactions, was unexpectedly called in at the board meeting, where the chairman proceeded to deliver an impressive address, full of oratorical flourishes which befitted the occasion, and asked him whether he would be willing to accept the vacant post.

"We have the greatest confidence in you," he concluded.

Although Ivan Hron was exceedingly astonished, he showed his surprise in no way. Up to a certain point he had confidence in his own ability, and presence of mind enough to answer that his acceptance would depend on their conditions.

"The conditions will be the same that held good for your predecessor," said the chairman of the board meeting, "and if you fulfil our expectations they will be better still. The state of our affairs entitles us to great hopes; we only need a firm, energetic director. That is why we have chosen you."

Ivan Hron accepted, and the evening papers carried the news that same day to all those who were interested in the appointment of the general manager.

"Lucky fellow!" some said. "They'll have a good head on their shoulders," said others.

A most promising future now lay before Ivan Hron. He remained unmarried for another year, as though to test the ground under his feet. And when he found it was firm, he got married.

Many people were surprised that he had chosen a wife without a fortune. They were still more surprised when they heard that she had been an heiress until lately, when with the failure of her father's business the glamour which surrounded her had suddenly been eclipsed. Why had he knocked at that door when his position made him worth thousands? Was he under an obligation to her? Had he wooed her earlier and was now going to redeem his promises as a man of honour should? When circumstances take such a turn as his had done, surely promises are no longer binding, and so-called honour in these cases was ridiculous, said the more experienced and worldly among his friends and acquaintances.

Nobody knew that this unpromising match had cost Ivan Hron a great deal of trouble and perseverance; that he looked upon the father's failure as a happy coincidence; that the girl had yielded to the urgent request of her parents to accept the hand which was offering her a safe future, and which might perhaps save the whole family from the greatest misery. And Ivan Hron had beamed with happiness although he had led his pale bride to the altar and out of the church in an almost fainting condition.

He had now been married ten years. He was a handsome man in the forties, and some of his former fellow-students, now elderly clerks in lawyers' offices, unbriefed barristers, or doctors who had failed in their final examinations, looked with envy on the former student who had not finished his university career because he had been sent down.

Many of them were married and had several children; their wives had aged before their time, and often there was hardly enough for the current household expenses. Ivan Hron meanwhile belonged to the "élite." He had his carriage, was rarely seen on foot; his wife was still a beautiful woman, his salary increased from year to year; he lived in his own handsome villa, travelled for six weeks in the year, and had no children.

No children! His friends did not know how painful this part of his good fortune was to Hron. For none of the successes and attainments of his life gave him the happiness which a wicker-basket with muslin curtains and the downy head of a rosy, beloved small creature asleep in it would have given him. In spite of all the glamour of his brilliant, exciting life, Hron did not get rid of the old-fashioned feeling that life is perfect only when it is blessed with children. What point, what aim was there in his whole successful career? Why had he worked himself up to the highest position which was open to him, why did he save, to whom would he leave his fortune when, old and frail, he would end his days? What would rejoice his heart in old age?

Moreover, in his case his disappointment was not one of the accidents of life; he did not count how many years he had been married to his beloved Magda and still they were alone. He had married on purpose to have a family, and therefore this unfulfilled desire hurt him all the more. He had been bred in the country and was untouched by the town-bred egoism which aims solely at enjoyment for its own sake, at an untroubled existence dedicated to the "Ego" and its wishes. He wanted children, and when he took his beloved bride home he looked forward to holding a little creature in his arms in course of time. Perhaps the full measure of his longing for a family was due to his having early been disowned by his own people on account of his youthful folly; he had never been received again under the paternal roof. He longed to fill up this void by his marriage to Magdalena. He watched her looks, almost spied upon her sighs at night, and trembled with impatience for the moment when she would blushingly confide to him her sweetest secret. But this moment

never came. She confided nothing; she went to and fro in their beautifully furnished home, and her face more and more distinctly took on a sad, almost pained expression; a line appeared which started from her prettily shaped nose and included her lips. This expression did not even quite vanish when she laughed heartily; and when she was not smiling, the wistful, sorrowful look quite gained the upper hand.

Was she too feeling what it was that made them miss being perfectly happy? Did she know what was passing in her husband's soul? How could she have failed to feel and to guess? No one is so absolutely the slave of his will at every moment, that not a word or a look should betray what is slumbering in the depth of his heart, or what it is for which he is hungering and thirsting. Ivan Hron was no exception to the rule. There was hardly a moment when Mrs. Hron did not guess her husband's wishes, if guessing indeed were necessary. Was she not a woman?

Hron would often invite friends to dinner or supper so as to have life in his empty, quiet rooms, and to see them a little untidy. There were times when he did not feel happy in the spotless surroundings of his home, where for months together everything stood in its appointed place, polished, and shining with neatness; where not a speck of dust was to be found, and the well-swept carpets hushed every footstep; where sounds of romping were never heard.

"You are living like a prince," said one of his guests; "how comfortable this house is, and how charmingly furnished."

"And what lovely works of art," added his visitor's wife, who did not get tired of looking again and again at the beautiful pictures and graceful statuettes, or of turning over the leaves of albums filled with photographs of towns and lovely places which Hron either alone or with his wife had visited. She looked at the antique furniture almost with a touch of envy. "You do know how to arrange things," she sighed; "you are lucky."

Ivan Hron looked round at the things which had excited her envy, and looked almost bored. They had interested him chiefly at the time when he had bought them; it gave him pleasure to arrange them or put them up on the walls, but after that he got accustomed to them, seeing them every day, and in the end he hardly noticed them. He said without a note of pleasure in his voice, and thinking of the rotund figure of the little woman:

"The rooms are pretty enough, but they are too quiet. I wish there were more of us."

He glanced furtively at his wife who had ceased to smile; he even thought that it was all that Magdalena could do to suppress the tears which were rising to her eyes.

Another time they themselves were on a visit to friends who had three small children; the youngest was a charming, curly boy. They were entertaining them with singing, music, and animated conversation, but none of these things seemed to interest Hron. He devoted himself entirely to the

little rascal in his high chair; he took him on his knee, allowed him to pull his nose and beard, chased him again and again under the table and caught him up to begin afresh.

Mrs. Hron kept up the appearance of conversation with her hosts, but she was casting perpetual side-glances at her husband's game with the boy, and her eyes betrayed the pain which was wringing her heart. This one gift to him was denied her! How happy she would be if the laughter of children were to echo through their own house, if Ivan could chase a barefooted little fellow of his own!

In the middle of the game Hron suddenly lifted his head and caught one of these glances; he understood what was passing in her mind and left the boy alone. His absorption in the strange child must look like a reproach, and he did not reproach her, he loved her far too much for that. Had they a right, moreover, to reproach each other? Did any one in the world know whose fault it was that they had remained alone? Once he had taken refuge from his secret disappointment in a visit to a doctor, and confided in him. Was there a remedy? What could be done? Whose fault was this misfortune? No, not fault, he corrected himself; there was no fault, no failing . . . but the cause, the cause?

That was difficult to say. Sometimes it was the husband, sometimes the wife — a physiological problem, inexplicable. Perhaps incompatibility, two natures which do not meet; there was no explanation, no help.

Then Ivan Hron began to brood. He thought over his past life; he was healthy, without a blemish or taint. He must be unsuitably mated then? Perhaps he had been too hasty about the whole affair.

How many times had he seen his wife before their marriage? Two or three times; first in Dresden on a holiday. He had noticed a gentleman and a charming girl who were talking to each other in Czech. He concluded that they must be his countrymen, probably also on a holiday. He had seen her, heard her talking Czech, and fallen in love with her. He had introduced himself and followed them like a shadow for two days; then they had gone home. Soon afterwards he also left; he took no further pleasure in his surroundings. He had learned that the gentleman was a manufacturer from one of the larger towns in Bohemia, the girl was his daughter. After a little while he purposely visited their town and ventured to call on the family. He was received with civility — no more. The girl was a distinguished personality, but she was very cold. Her eyes had plainly shown him her astonishment when he presented himself: "Does our accidental meeting in Dresden give you the right to follow me to the bosom of my family?" they seemed to say.

He went away, and a week later boldly asked for her hand. He wrote to her and to her father at the same time. The father's letter was very polite; he evaded the disagreeable duty of a direct answer by the promise that his daughter herself should send the decision.

She had decided. Graciously but firmly she rejected his proposal.

"Well, that's finished," Hron said to himself, "now I must leave it alone. I suppose I am not important enough for her."

But then the unexpected thing had happened: he saw from the newspapers six months later that her father's business had failed.

This news produced a strange sensation in Ivan Hron. He could have shouted for joy. How would his chances stand now? He returned to the town where they lived to repeat his offer personally.

How embarrassed they had been when he appeared; almost as if they were ashamed of themselves! Hron told them as tactfully as possible that his position would assure their daughter a life free of cares, and all the comforts she had been used to in her own home.

The girl had seemed almost in despair. This time her father spoke for her. He did not refuse Hron's offer, but asked for a respite: "Wait a month or two . . . or perhaps six months; have patience," he said. "You do not know how much we all have suffered; everything is changed. And we have to see to many things. I know you are a generous man, you have proved it by returning now that we are in trouble. It is not every man who thinks as you do."

Ivan Hron did wait for a whole six months; after that he wrote again, urgently, almost imploringly. It was not the general manager of an important banking combine who spoke in these letters, but a young enthusiast. And Magda became his own. Her father wrote to him that she consented. Then Hron had married her.

Later on he often thought of all this, and of the strange circumstances with which his suit and marriage had been attended. Had not fate in the first instance pointed out his way? Ought he not to have buried his hopes after that first refusal? Perhaps he would have found a girl equally beautiful, gentle and distinguished who would have made him wholly happy. . . .

He was always seized with a feeling of unspeakable sorrow when he arrived at this thought. Had Magda unconsciously had premonitions which had made her stand out against the marriage? Did she guess that she would never make her husband entirely happy? Was it a conviction that she would remain childless?

Then it would be she who was at fault!

Ivan Hron was almost maddened by his pondering and brooding at times. But tenderest compassion and deep pain filled his heart when, sometimes, late at night after having finished some important piece of work, he entered their bedroom on tiptoe. Before opening the door he would listen whether he could hear her sobbing. Then he would wait for hours until the spasm subsided, creep to his bed like a thief, relieved when he heard her breathing quietly, and in the morning when he waked her with a kiss, express in it his whole love and tenderness. And when

his wife returned his embrace so warmly and gratefully, she seemed to be asking his forgiveness. When he looked at her as she went about her occupations and duties during the day with care and thoughtfulness, he fell in love with her afresh, and kissed her as on that first day when he had taken her to their new home. Therefore the constant recurrence of the thought: "How much happier we might be if there were yet another being to care for . . ." was all the more painful to him.

One beautiful afternoon in the summer Ivan returned home earlier than usual from his office. As he had his own latchkey he had no need to ring the bell, and entered unobserved. He put his hat and stick down in his study, and went towards his wife's room. He did not hear his own step on the thick carpet. . . . Magda had not heard it either.

She hardly had time between the moment of his opening the door and coming up to her, to fold up a letter which she had been reading, and slip it into the envelope. She did it quietly, and Hron did not notice that her hands were trembling. When he was by her side, she leant her left hand with the letter in it on the table, and smoothed down something in her dress with the right hand, thus keeping both her hands occupied. He could not have failed to feel them trembling if he had touched them.

"You've had a letter?" asked Ivan, pointing to the envelope which peeped out from beneath her fingers; he bent down to kiss her.

Every drop of blood ebbed from her face when her lips met those of her husband; her half-extinguished "Yes" was lost in her kiss.

"From home?" he continued, looking at the stamp, "what news?"

Involuntarily he stretched out his hand for the letter. At that moment Mrs. Hron felt as though she must run away or throw herself out of the window, . . . but if she would avoid a catastrophe she must do nothing to rouse his suspicion. Her fingers painfully unclasped, but leant the more heavily on the table.

Hron took up the letter.

"That looks like a weekly review," he said good-humouredly, feeling it with his fingers, "have you read it?" He half pulled the letter from the envelope, and recognized his mother-in-law's handwriting.

"Not quite," answered the young woman. She tried to speak as audibly as she could, but her voice failed her, and her husband began to open the sheets which enclosed another sheet of paper.

"Well, the volumes you write to them are not much shorter," he said kindly, and looked at her before he quite unfolded the letter.

She was standing upright, looking upon his hands with fear in her eyes, and was as white as chalk. Her fixed eyes did not take in her husband's astonishment.

Ivan Hron did not understand; but he thought he did. He suddenly remembered that she never touched his letters, however long they might

have been lying on his writing-table: that she never even read a postcard addressed to him; she never showed the least curiosity about his correspondence. He had returned this reticence with regard to her letters. He never touched them without first asking: "May I?" To-day he had failed to do this . . . she had not even finished reading the letter . . . he had broken the custom which had become a tacit understanding between them. That must be the cause of her astonishment and consternation. Therefore Ivan Hron folded the sheet up again, put it back into the envelope which he laid down on the table, and said in a conciliatory tone; "Forgive me, Magda, that was not right."

His wife forced herself to a gentle smile to conceal her terror, and it was a little while before she was able to say: "You know it is from our people, nothing of importance, nothing new."

She at once turned the conversation: "You are early to-day; has anything happened?"

"What should have happened?" said her husband, "I hurried home because I hoped we might get a walk. It is such lovely weather. If you feel inclined, we might go to the Sophia Island. Will you get ready?"

Whistling softly to himself, he went to his room to wash his hands and put on fresh cuffs.

When he had gone, his wife opened a drawer of her bureau which contained her most precious and valuable possessions, took out a small box of cedarwood, locked the letter up in it, put the key in her pocket and went out to dress.

They went down the staircase together and out into the street, where Hron offered his arm to his wife. He was delighted to feel how firmly she put her hand on his arm and pressed close to him. Yes, this arm was her hold and firm protection in this world!

Ivan Hron had no idea of what was passing in her mind.

A few days after this incident, which had passed entirely from Hron's memory, he was left alone in the house. He was planning his annual holiday outside Bohemia with his wife, and according to their custom Magda always went home to her parents for a few days first. They were now old, and she wished to see them and have the satisfaction of having been with them once more.

In her absence Ivan made preparations for their departure. His leave had begun already, and he spent his days at home. He locked up things that were to be left behind, and put everything in order. The next day Mrs. Hron was to return from her native town.

Ivan Hron came home from his dinner at a restaurant, and began to pack his handbag. Then he went though all the rooms to see whether he had forgotten anything. He went into his wife's room, and smiled, noticing the order and neatness of everything.

Suddenly his eye was caught by her walnut bureau. All the drawers were locked except the top one which had been pushed back hastily.

"Just fancy, all her treasures unlocked," he thought: "the room is not locked either; the servant might have put her nose into everything."

Involuntarily and without a set purpose, he took hold of the two ornamental bronze rings and pulled out the drawer.

In it were books, jewelry, embroideries, photographs, and keepsakes. A box of cedar-wood was in the right-hand corner. He knew it; he himself had given it her as a Christmas or New Year's present, when she had expressed a wish for a box in which to keep various trifles.

Hron touched the little box, and noticed that the key of wrought iron was in it.

"Careless little woman! The drawer open and the key in her box! And what about all those sacred secrets, those valueless, and yet so carefully guarded mysteries?"

It suddenly struck him, although he did not feel the ordinary human curiosity: "I wonder what they are, these things that my dear Magda has collected in this box?"

He almost smiled at the thought that perhaps his first letter was among them, the one which she had answered with a refusal? As though this thought had with lightning-speed been transferred to his hand, he touched the key, turned it and opened the lid. The remembrance of the letter, the answer to which had poisoned six months of his life, was now really exciting his curiosity. Had Magda kept it? He himself was keeping her answer in a drawer of his writing-table. Tactless or not . . . he wanted to know! The little box was filled with receipts and papers of various kinds; on the top was the letter which he had recently held in his hand and returned to his wife. He recognized it by the handwriting and the date on the postmark. But the letter had not been entirely slipped into the envelope, a corner of it was peeping out; Magda had probably read it several times, and put it back loosely. Another letter was folded into the large sheets which were covered with his mother-in-law's handwriting, well known to him. Hron could only see the endings of words which were written in an unknown, undeveloped hand.

He did not know why he did it, as he was in fact looking for something else, but he pulled out the sheet which was covered on all its four pages with sprawling, large letters. It was the attempt of a hand still awkward, and not much used to writing fluently. Irregular letters . . . the difference of thickness in the up- and down-strokes carefully observed . . . only children write like that. Which of the relatives . . . ?

He opened the sheet and read:

"My beloved Mummy, — How good of you to let me write to you again. I would like to write to you every day to tell you that I think of you and pray for you, because the clergyman tells us at school that we must pray for our parents. But as I cannot pray for Papa who is dead, I

pray for my dear Mama whom I love so much, and I wish she were with me, because I cannot be with her. I do not know why I cannot be with her, when every daughter is with her mother. I know I cannot be with my Papa when he is dead, but why not with my Mama? And when you say you love me, why do you not take me with you? When I ask the lady, she tells me that the gentleman would not like it. What gentleman would not like it? I think you must be in service like other mothers, and so you cannot have me with you, and I am so sorry I do not know where you are either. My beloved Mummy, I would hide in a corner and keep quite quiet, so as not to worry the gentleman, and all day long I would not come out of my corner and the gentleman need not see me, and would not scold you, because he would not know I was there. But at night, when you go to your little room I would kiss you, and sleep in your bed, and pray for you and your gentleman as I do now. I could go to school, the same as I do here, and you should be pleased with me, for I like my lessons, and I am going to be moved to a higher standard again. Oh my beloved mother, I should so like to have a photo of you; the lady has photos of her sisters and aunts and other relations. When the other lady came, who is my grandmother, I asked her for one, but she said I could not have it, because you had not got one. And she told me I must be good, or else I must never write to you or see you again. I cried very much, because I only see you once a year, and then I would never see you at all. My grandmother too cried, and said I might write to you again, that you had allowed it, and grandmother will come for this letter and send it to you, for little girls cannot send letters off by themselves, grandmother says.

"Dearest Mummy, come again, and come and see me on my birthday, which is on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul; I shall be eleven. I kiss your hand and am your obedient daughter, MAGDA

"*June 15th.*"

Ivan Hron had read the letter thinking that it must have got by mistake into the envelope which bore his wife's address. But when he arrived at the signature "Magda," he started. His heart beat with the sudden shock. He felt an unusual wave of heat mount to his head and flood his cheeks. A thought struck him which was so strange that he was startled afresh, and tried not to finish it. He quickly took up the second letter in his mother-in-law's handwriting. He devoured its contents, and large drops of perspiration were standing on his forehead, as though he were running a race. He felt his feet giving way beneath him, and sat down to finish the letter. There was nothing suspicious in it, the usual home news, good advice, inquiries, remembrances to her husband and thanks for his last contribution to the household expenses. Only quite at the end: "I am sending you this letter which you will like to see, and am your loving mother. . . ."

There it was! That was the reference to the letter!

Ivan Hron wiped his forehead and read his mother-in-law's letter again, and then that of little eleven-years-old Magda. His wife's name!

He re-read it with the utmost attention.

Now, alas! he understood; but he also felt as though his head would burst. His Magda, his wife is little Magda's . . . impossible!

He sprang to his feet, caught up the little box, and went to his room with it. He locked the door, so as not to be disturbed, and hastily turned out the contents: letters, photographs, empty envelopes. But in spite of his eagerness he was careful to put them down in their proper order, so that nothing should betray afterwards that he had read anything. He felt like a criminal while he was following up Magda's secret. But even if it should be a crime, he was going to commit it!

His hands were trembling feverishly, as he went through the papers; he took all his father- and mother-in-law's letters out of their envelopes, read them at a glance . . . nothing, nothing! Suddenly he came upon another letter written in the sprawling hand . . . a second . . . a third.

There were no more. The one which he had read first was the longest. The others were the more unlettered the older their date. Hron understood; as she made greater progress at school she was the more able to express her thoughts; her letters became longer, more legible, more appealing. From each of the four letters spoke the longing of this unknown child to see her mother, to be with her always. This incoherent babbling, these laboured sentences were the expression of a homesick child, praying for the fulfilment of its dearest wish.

Hron sat quite still and reflected painfully; his thoughts were like red-hot wires that penetrated his brain. "My Magda . . . my Magda!" recurred over and over in his reflections, "and then this child, this second Magda. . . ."

He recalled the moment when he had seen Magda for the first time, remembered how he had wooed her and been refused, and finally accepted. What had happened between the moment when he had first met her and the day when he had at last taken her to his home?

And suddenly Hron turned to his wife's little box again. Did it contain nothing else? Would he find the explanation of this terrible calamity? He remembered that the salesman had drawn his attention to the double bottom when he had bought the box; he had forgotten the contrivance, but now he tried hastily to discover the little hiding-place. He removed the sides, pulled out two ornamental rosettes and . . . there was the bottom. In it were some faded papers, covered with writing . . . in Magda's hand. They looked like the beginnings of letters, or notes from a diary; loose leaves, torn out of a book.

Hron began to read these sheets; the handwriting varied considerably, they had evidently been written at odd moments on various occasions.

He read, and almost forgot to breathe. These leaves were the outpourings and anguished cries of a woman's soul in despair. If he had had any doubt as to the relationship of the two Magdas, these lines removed them. He saw the whole situation clearly. . . . What a fearful discovery! His own, his adored Magda!

Some of the sheets were quite fragmentary: "There are worse things than death," began one, "and I am on the rack. Everything that I possessed in life has been destroyed . . . our good name, my father's position after a life of hard work . . . all in one blow. The fruits of his labour are lost. But, terrible as these losses are — all the more because of their suddenness — they do not shatter me. I wish they did!

"But my fate is more terrible than this; that of my parents is its crowning disaster. The shame, oh the shame! Never-ending shame clings to my wasted life!

"It was all like a horrible, fantastic dream: but the crying of the little creature whom they have separated from me, the crying that I heard for a moment only, which was lost in the distance when they carried the little girl away, this crying was the proof of a dreadful reality.

"And Robert does not return! He has disappeared, and gives no sign of whether he is alive or dead. Alas! my fall should have helped him to rise, but then came my father's failure . . . and what can be my value now? Did ever two more terrible misfortunes meet?"

Another sheet began:

"He does not return. Perhaps he is seeking death, perhaps he may have found it. The misery of it! He is a coward; it would have needed energy on his part to begin life afresh, and his life would have given me back my life also. What a fate, to have been betrayed by a mountebank! But the most terrible thing about it is that that other man who came into my life, is again offering me his hand and asking for mine. I am in despair. I resist all I can, but there is my father, who is looking so ill; he does not say anything, but his dear old eyes make such an eloquent appeal . . . my mother was on her knees before me, wringing her hands and entreating me: Don't refuse him . . . consent!

"This other, good, honest man is to be deceived. My parents entreat me that it should be so. Shall I give in to their appeal? Shall I make up my mind to hide from him what sort of a wife he wishes to marry?

"And to be separated for ever from that innocent creature . . . disavow her for ever! For she will not die. I am sure my parents are praying that she might be taken, but my prayers are stronger, and she will live! I keep on praying that she will live. . . ."

Again on another sheet:

"The decision has been made; my conscience has tormented me from the moment when my father said 'Yes' for me. Do I care for him? Have I a right to say I love the man whom I approach with a lie? How can I bear his eyes, how shall I breathe in his embraces?

"They have tormented me, forced my hands! They took away my child, I do not know where she is. I want to see her . . . I am dying with longing to kiss her, press her to my heart . . . where is she?

"They promised that I should see her if I consented to marry him. My child, what a price to pay for your kisses! Unfortunate Ivan! What a price for you to pay for me . . . how you are being deceived. . . ."

On the last sheet, on which the first lines had been crossed out, he read:

"To-morrow is my wedding day . . . I feel as though it were my funeral. Alas! I feel something is being carried to its grave. . . . I myself am burying it. I am murdering my peace of mind . . . perhaps I am also murdering Ivan's happiness.

"And my father and mother kiss me and embrace me. Neither of them says a word about it, but their eyes are saying a great deal. They are grateful to me that I have yielded, that I have consented to . . . sell myself. I cannot express what I feel when I see Ivan, full of love, beaming with happiness because I am to be his. . . .

"There is one thought of comfort in these bitter, desperate hours for which I am thanking heaven: Robert is dead. He has gone out of my life; his shadow will never fall between Ivan and me, he will never come back.

"I do not know if the moment will ever come when I shall dare to say that I love Ivan. I tremble when I think of his asking me whether I love him. And perhaps he will ask me to-morrow . . . to-morrow! But the thought that that coward is dead is balm to my soul."

Ivan Hron had finished the perusal of the papers; he breathed a sigh of relief. After what he had read, this fact that the unknown father of little Magda was no longer alive, was a load off his mind. He was breathing audibly, like a man waking up out of a heavy sleep.

"Whoever he was, he is dead now. . . ."

Ivan Hron stared at the sheets and fragmentary notes in front of him with burning eyes; then he slowly put his elbows on to the table and buried his head in his hands; his soul had been profoundly stirred, and a painful sob broke from his compressed throat. A moment later his whole body, his shoulders and hands and head began to tremble, and large tears fell upon the faded, traitorous leaves.

It did not occur to him to think of how long it was since he had cried, nor that he was a strong man with experience of life, and that he ought not to give way; he only felt a fearful scorching pain, such as he had felt once before in his life at the time when he had been banished from his home on account of his ill-considered youthful exploit. But at that time he had been young, and the whole world lay open before him. He had then sustained an irreparable loss, but from the depth of his despair he looked for the dawn of a future. What was left to him now? He was now living

that future to which he had been looking forward then; he had climbed to the summit of his life, there was no going higher or further. His daily life was circumscribed, there would be no great changes either in his career or in his home; he had come to the limits of both. He was at the head of his office and he was married; this was the last stage of his life, and though it might go on for another ten or twenty years, it would always be the same. He would get older, one day he would retire; there were no other prospects. He well knew the limits within which he was living, and now, just as he was approaching their border, this thing happened, to poison both the past and the future for him!

Ivan Hron wept for a long time, until his tears naturally ceased to flow. Only now and then convulsive spasms betrayed his inward crying. But even the spasms became less frequent; there was a sob from time to time, and at last a silence.

He sat for a while, supporting his head in his hand. He did not realize how great the relief had been which his tears had given him. When he raised his head, his tears had ceased to flow, only his eyes were a little swollen and inflamed. The expression of his face was calm; the storm had passed. He looked as though he had resigned himself to an irreparable, unalterable fate.

He took his pocket-handkerchief and wiped his eyes; then he quietly replaced the sheets of papers, letters, photographs and trifles in the box in their proper order. Nothing should betray their having been touched by an unauthorized hand. When he took up little Magda's fateful letter, which had so recently caused him the bitterest moment of his life, he glanced once more at the lines written by this unknown, pining little creature. Now he could enter into it much more. Alas! How much bitterness this little heart had already had to taste! But how great must have been the pain that his wife had suffered all the time since she had been tied to him and separated from her child . . . day by day, whole months, years . . . ten long years. What fortitude this delicate woman had shown in mastering herself and enduring the separation . . . or was she upheld by some hope? What was this hope?

Hron stopped short at the words: "Dearest Mummy, come again, come on my birthday, on the day of St. Peter and St. Paul. . . ."

Yes, Magda had complied with her wish. It was a week since she went away, and to-day was St. Peter and St. Paul. At the moment when her fateful secret had revealed itself to him accidentally, a little creature in some distant place was laughing with joy at her mother's embrace, and his wife was happy in the presence of her growing daughter, answering her thousand questions, asking a thousand herself, kissing her, kissing her for a whole year. But in the midst of all this love and tenderness the clock would strike mercilessly, the day would wane, and Magda press her child closer and yet closer . . . her child, from whom she must tear herself after

a few hours, to be separated again for a whole year. And even if she should think of him, her husband, how bitter must that thought be to her! She would have to return to him without betraying by a single word what she had gone through. Her heart would break with the pain of another separation, yet she might not complain; she must master herself with all her strength, so as not to arouse his suspicion. Where would her thoughts be before she returned to him, when he would press her to his heart and kiss her? Every caress which he had taken to himself had really been meant for her little daughter. When she passed her hand over his head she probably thought of her. And perhaps she hoped to win his forgiveness at the moment when he might discover her secret, with the care, tenderness and attention which she had given him. Did she dread that moment? Surely, it must haunt her!

Ivan's heart was caught up in a feeling of unbounded pity. The feeling which was uppermost in his mind was not that he had been deceived, but that he had been excluded from a triple alliance.

Slowly he folded up the letter and put it, and what was left of other things, back into their place, and carried the box to Magda's room. He carefully replaced it in the drawer, which he locked, so that Magda should have no idea that her carelessness had induced any one to open it.

As he left the room, he happened to look into a glass, and noticed his inflamed, swollen eyes. He hurried into his room, poured water into his basin, adding a little lavender water, and sponged and dried his face. When he had done this and brushed his dishevelled hair, Hron slowly changed his clothes. The large, empty rooms seemed lonely, and he felt that he must get away from them into the fresh air, to some place where he would not be likely to meet many people. He could not bear the idea of seeing any one he knew; he wanted to be alone, to reflect, to work out this problem and come to a resolution. He locked his wife's room and put the key in his pocket, in case the servant should spy upon her secret in his absence. How glad he was that that moment had found him alone; he had allowed the girl to go to a procession. No one had surprised him, no one knew that anything had happened.

He slowly went down the stairs. His thoughts were moving round and round in a strange circle. A picture of Doré's from the *édition de luxe* of his Bible occurred to him; it represented the expulsion from paradise. As he left his house he felt as though he too were being driven from his paradise. Day by day he had hastened hither to meet his beloved Magda. He thought of her return the next day and shivered. How would he feel at meeting her? Would he be able to master his features sufficiently for her not to see that he now knew what she had kept a secret for so long, what perhaps she had meant to keep a secret for ever? What kind of a life between them would it be if Magda discovered *his* secret?

If only he could escape meeting friends to-day! He wished he were a stranger to all the world.

He went to a part of Prague where he had hardly ever been before, across the "little bridge" and through the passages of the crooked old town on the banks of the Moldavia. It was a fine day; all those who could walk had left the streets behind; Hron met only a few strangers. The place seemed almost deserted. He crossed the river by the stone bridge and turned through a side-street towards the Bruska. But that was full of people, so he went through the archway and out into the fields.

He breathed a sigh of relief when he was there, but the consciousness of his sorrow did not leave him. He thought of his wedding-day and his married life. His thoughts came and went incoherently; he thought of the time before his marriage. Who was this man who had been the first to win Magda's heart, her whole heart, even herself? Who was he, the father of Magda, who was dead? When had all that happened? And again he felt the tears rising in his throat, and an immeasurable pain, as though he had lost what he treasured most. But at that time . . . Magda had not been his! He also thought of the moments when their childlessness had been most bitter to him; when he had looked enviously at his friends' families and their happiness, when he had romped with their children. Now he understood Magda's mute, eloquent looks on those occasions, which had haunted him. "If that were my child!" she must have thought. Yes: she was thinking of her own child who was living hidden, a stranger among strangers, uncaressed, without a father, and deprived of her mother too during all the years when she most needed her. That was what her looks meant . . . it was that . . . that! At moments when Hron had caressed other children her thoughts, with all the suppressed, secret mother-instinct fled to her own lonely little daughter whom she dared not acknowledge, of whom she might not be proud, whom she might not kiss before all the world, nor dress her, nor take her to school, whom she could not tuck up at night, nor prepare Santa Claus surprises for her, and taste that sweetest of all joys, that of seeing a little face beam with delight. The child had been robbed of everything, and so had she. What an unending atonement! She had a child which she could not take into her own home. He felt that it was only now that he knew her really, and in spite of all the bitterness which filled his heart he sighed: "Poor Magda!" Magda had a child! Hron suddenly stopped dead; his thoughts glanced off in another direction. She *had* a child!

Ivan Hron took off his hat, wiped his forehead and looked straight in front of him at the green field. But he did not know what he was looking at, he was looking inwards. All the morbid moments of his brooding on the problem of their childlessness passed before his soul. He remembered how he had tormented himself to find the cause of it. And his wife had had . . . she had a child!

He stood, drawing deep breaths.

What was passing in Magda's mind, if she saw through him? Did she

guess that he suspected the fault to be hers? And she had to bear the blame in silence.

He was overcome by remorse. He now realized fully how difficult the moment of their meeting would be.

Ivan Hron started off again along the edge of the field; he did not care whither he was going, he only sought for an escape from the labyrinth of his thoughts. He counted neither moments nor hours, he did not know how long he had been wandering about, when the setting sun reminded him that night was approaching.

He turned back towards Prague hurriedly, without minding by which road he went, noticing nothing by the way. From the Belvedere he turned to cross the Francis-Joseph bridge.

Not till he had reached the narrow Elisabeth Street did he become conscious of ordinary daily life again. He glanced at the two rows of high houses with their countless windows, and the thought struck him:

"Now, this is only a small fraction of a big town, yet what a multitude of little unimportant human beings, what life-stories, problems, emotions and struggles lie hidden behind all those windows, in all the rooms inhabited by people; under the roofs of the splendid mansions with balconies as well as under those of back-alleys. And when these struggling souls come out into the streets, they hide what is passing in them."

He was suddenly seized by a fear that some one might guess from his looks how miserable, humbled and desperate he felt. No! Only he himself should know what had happened to him; no one should stand still and look after him, pitying him and thinking: "Poor Hron, whatever is the matter with him?" As though he had not a trouble in the world, Hron pulled down his waistcoat, looked at his watch, felt whether he had a cigar with him, lit it deliberately, and walked towards Joseph's Square.

Along the narrow Elisabeth Street human life had flowed like a stream, but in Joseph Square it expanded in broad billows like a sea. All the excursionists converged hither to be scattered in all directions. The trams were rattling past, making the flag-stones tremble. Almost forgetting his troubles, he looked at the crowds which were storming the cars. These people, battling for room to sit or stand in them, seemed to him like lunatics. They fought their way with their elbows, pushed others off the steps to mount in their place; some positively butted into a medley of bodies and limbs, and others who had already boarded a car, were suddenly seized with fear and tried to alight again. Hats fell from their heads; some caught their dresses, and the seams of their garments were strained to the utmost, or gave way.

"What do they mean by it?" thought Hron, "why this wild struggle?"

The gas-lamps were beginning to sparkle . . . one . . . another . . . a third. Ivan Hron watched the lamplighter with his pole who went regularly from post to post with his head bent, and without minding the wild

tumult. A yellow mail-cart rattled past; the full letter boxes of the whole town would now yield their contents. Bourgeois with their wives returned from their walks; the women led the bigger children by the hand, the men carried the little ones. A detachment of firemen were crossing the street. The police were changing patrols.

Ivan felt that there was something restful to his mind in all this noise and movement, rattling and crowding. By degrees he became calmer. His senses, strained to breaking point by the great shock, relaxed and were able to take in other impressions. He put his hat, which had slipped back, straight, and walked more firmly.

"Forget it all . . . at least for a while, for to-night!"

He made up his mind to join a party of his friends at a restaurant, so as to change his thoughts. He absolutely must think of something else, he had brooded enough. He meant to drink a good deal. Many people cure their troubles with wine; he too would try this remedy. He must avoid being alone in the empty house; he must take home an atmosphere of conviviality, else he would feel suffocated. And Hron went into a restaurant where he would be sure to meet friends.

But Ivan was one of those men who did not easily get drunk; his strong head could always master the effect of the wine, and he did not care to drink far beyond his measure. Yet the wine cheered him; he listened to the talk and gossip, and forced himself to join in it. He spent several hours in this noisy company, and received his friends' respectful remembrances to his wife almost cheerfully. It was past midnight when he returned home. The servant was snoring in her bedroom next the kitchen. Ivan gently locked the door and went through the hall on tiptoe. He found a letter from his wife on the table; she let him know by which train she intended to arrive. He lit the candles in his bedroom and went to bed with a book. But he had not been reading many lines when his hands with the book slowly dropped on the coverlet, and he looked across at the portrait of his wife over the chesterfield. For nearly an hour he lay quite still, looking fixedly at the lovely face which was so dear to him. He was painfully winning through to a resolution. Presently his lips moved without a sound, framing the words: "It shall be so." Perhaps he hardly heard them himself; he had instinctively given form to the last link in the chain of his thoughts, which might prove a solution of the problem.

Then he sat up in bed and put out both candles in the branch-candlestick. When he lay back in his pillows he whispered reproachfully: "Magda, Magda!"

Magda Hron had told her husband that she would arrive on the last day of June by the afternoon train. Ivan was thankful that it would be in the later part of the day, almost in the evening; he would have the whole day to set his mind in order, as he said to himself.

He had hoped for this when he had returned from the restaurant the night before. But apparently the setting in order took him a shorter time than he had anticipated. Although he had been out unusually late the night before and had not gone to sleep for a good while, he awoke at an early hour and got up at once. He looked thoughtful but calm, his face betrayed no trace of yesterday's struggle. The storm had passed, his resolution held firm.

What was his resolution? Was he going to put his wife away? Or induce her to consent to a separation with maintenance for her and her daughter? This thought had occurred to him, but had been rejected at once. He realized that he could not hope to redeem his over-insistence in the past, nor ought to punish his wife by bringing an action. He was a prominent man, and his position would not stand a scandal; but apart from that, what would he gain by violent measures? Would he be the happier for them? Would they not utterly destroy his future life? Was it likely that Magda would be happy, if the moment which restored her to her daughter were to rob her of her husband and home? And even if she should bear this fate without murmuring, could he live without her after the ten years of purest harmony between them, and when he loved her as much now as when he took her to his house for the first time? Nay . . . since yesterday he loved her with a passion which was mingled with pain; when he had learnt that he had a rival in the child, he had begun to tremble for his place in her heart.

Hron's struggle was over, he looked composed. He dressed quickly, breakfasted, and told the servant at what time her mistress would return, and what she was to prepare, lit his cigar and left the house. It was too early to go to his office, so he decided to go for a walk. A stroll without a set purpose on this warm, sunny morning of the departing June would strengthen yesterday's resolution; he would breathe the fresh air, look at happy faces of people who went in all directions about their daily duties, taking them up at the point where they had left them yesterday, and trying not to show traces of intervening struggles.

He passed the Girls' High School. It was nearly eight o'clock, the children were hurrying to school. Many of them were accompanied by servants, elder sisters, or mothers. Hron stood still and from a distance watched the mothers taking leave of their darlings. They bent over them, gave them last instructions, then they kissed them lovingly and looked after them till they had disappeared in the school-entrance and winding corridors. His Magda would do the same; he knew she would not leave the child until she was quite sure she was safe. There was a faint smile on Hron's face when this thought crossed his mind like a flash. The stream of children was ebbing away: now it had been absorbed by the schoolhouse. Only a few late-comers ran in quickly, afraid of missing the begin-

ning of the lesson; at last the place was completely deserted. Hron walked on towards his office.

The hours were all too slow for him that day. He could hardly wait for his wife's return. He went to the Sophia Island, to dine in company with a few friends whose families were already in the country.

"Still a grass-widower?" some of them asked him.

"Only till to-night," he answered with a smile, "my wife will return this afternoon from her visit to her parents; then it will be only a few days before we are off on our holiday somewhere. Our boxes are ready to be packed."

"Where are you going, Direktor?"

"Perhaps to Berlin and Hamburg on the way to Heligoland, or a quiet seaside place like Travemünde, perhaps in the other direction, to Munich, Salzburg and the Alpine Lakes. I don't know yet, I shall see what my wife proposes."

Hron was absent-minded at dinner and hurried away soon after, as though he were afraid to miss the train. He gulped down his cup of black coffee and went home. He opened the windows in his wife's room and in the dining-room, so that she should not find them stuffy on her return. He put a bunch of fresh flowers into the bedroom, carnations and roses, which he had bought on his way home. He locked her room, told the servant to have dinner ready at seven o'clock, and loitered towards his office, although the official hour had not yet struck, as though he could hurry on the clock. He could hardly contain himself.

But the nearer six o'clock and with it her arrival approached, the more uneasy he became, as if after all he dreaded their meeting. He was grateful to the chief cashier for joining him as far as the station when he left the Bank; he did not wish to be alone. And when the cashier had left him, he was drawn into a vortex of departing and arriving people; he felt dazed with the perpetual ringing of bells, shouting of the staff, thundering of trains which arrived from both directions. Yet he welcomed the infernal noise; it would sufficiently absorb Magda's senses not to make her look too closely at his features, and discover the emotion which had flushed his cheeks.

Then her train was signalled, and rolled into the station a few minutes later. He at once saw her, as she was alighting. A slight trembling seized him, a few steps brought him near to her. The blood mounted to her face. He was relieved that he had to turn and speak to a porter before addressing her. Magda took his arm and walked on quickly, almost drawing him forward; she was looking straight ahead. Her cheeks were almost on fire. Hron did not guess or understand that she too always suffered from great nervousness when she met him again for the first time. She was almost dying with fear that she might betray in some way whence she came and of what nature her visit had been. All her attention was fixed on guard-

ing her secret, lest her husband should suspect her. But he had pressed her hand and drawn it closer . . . no, he suspected nothing! She was breathing more freely while he was helping her to get into the carriage, and while the wheels were rattling over the cobblestones. Saved once more!

"Well, Magda," said Hron, breaking the silence which had reigned between them since they had got into the carriage, and was beginning to frighten him, "have you had a good time? No disappointments?"

"Excellent, Ivan, everything went right," answered his wife.

"You found them all well?"

"Yes, quite. Father had not been well about a month ago. They did not tell me, because they did not want me to be anxious. But he is better, he is really quite well again."

"You found it hard to part with them, didn't you, Magda?" said Hron.

The blood again mounted to Magda's cheek. Her eyes became fixed, and did not meet his. Oh, how hard it had been to part with that little creature! But she was obliged to give an answer.

"You know I am fond of my parents, and they are getting old; every year is like a gift. And yet every year I leave them with the hope of seeing them the next."

"And they have not yet made up their minds to come and live in Prague?" he asked. "We would find a charming, cosy little nest for them and make them very comfortable. Haven't you tried to persuade them?"

Hron made this proposal every year on Magda's return from her old home, but she shrank from it. She would indeed have liked to have her parents near her, but if they came to Prague, how could she see little Magda? What pretext could she find? Two kinds of love were ever struggling within her, but the stronger, the mother-love always won the day.

"You are so kind, Ivan," she answered, "but I don't think we shall persuade them. They are too old; they had better stay in the surroundings in which they have lived all their lives; they would hardly get used to the life in Prague. If anything happened to them they would be sure to think it was because they had left their old home. Besides, it would mean greater expense for you; as it is you are showing them so much kindness that I don't know how I can ever be grateful enough to you."

She warmly pressed his hand.

Ivan Hron was unspeakably happy. He kept her hand in his and said gently: "Be fond of me always, Magda. It is the sweetest gratitude you can give me."

They were both silent after that for the few minutes which it took to reach their home.

Two days later the couple left Prague. Ivan was restless, but not because he wanted a change of scene. He was almost unwilling to travel this

year, indeed, quite unwilling. He would have liked to have carried out his plan at once, but he could not think of a cogent reason to give to his wife for not going for their usual trip. It was too late to pretend that he could not get leave; everything had been settled and prepared before Magda started to go to her parents. And Magda knew how he loved to travel. So they started, and went as far as Munich.

Hron was hoping that in strange surroundings, away from the daily round, and among strangers, he might more easily find an opportunity of saying what he wanted to say. On their travels, when they were closer companions than usual, they were always more tender, more intimate than at home. Hron always felt as though they were lovers.

The opportunity for which he was longing presented itself earlier than he thought. They stayed in Munich for a week, and went for a trip on the Stahrenberg Lake on their last day. It was a lovely, sunny morning. A light breeze was rippling the surface of the lake, when they left the train at Stahrenberg, to board the comfortable steamer "Wittelsbach." Their first objective was charming Leoni, where they ascended to the Rottmann's Height, and enjoyed the lovely view over the distant Alps. After an hour and a half they returned to the landing-stage, to go further up the lake by another steamer. A small family, perhaps belonging to the villa-colony of Leoni, boarded the steamer "Bavaria" at the same time; they were a young couple with two children, a boy of about three, a curly, sunburnt, restless little rogue, who ran about the deck like quicksilver, and a pale, almost transparent-looking girl of five, who was very much muffled up. It was easy to guess that this child with waxen cheeks had been racked by a severe illness quite recently, in fact, it had apparently not yet quite relaxed its hold upon the victim. The boy was looked after by a handsome, careful young girl, but the mother herself was nursing her little daughter, happy at being able to take her out on the lake again for the first time. She hardly took her eyes off the precious convalescent, at whose bed, no doubt, she had watched for whole nights with bitter tears and fervent prayers.

With her tired, hollow eyes the little girl was looking at the lake, beneath the opalescent surface of which slumbered the green depth. They were fixed on one spot, as though she were expecting to see mermaids rising from the water; she knew them well, her mother had often told her the story. Now and then the child coughed, and then the young mother would cover her throat more closely with the silk handkerchief, or wrap the small, pointed elbows round with a cloak. And a kiss would accompany each of these movements.

Ivan Hron was watching his wife . . . her eyes had been resting for a long time on the little girl, and returned to her over and over again. Ivan read what was passing in her mind: "She is thinking of her little one."

The lovely morning, the fresh strong air, the view of the distant Alps

had attuned his soul to tenderness; he was more receptive, more sensitive than usual. He guessed his wife's thoughts: yes, she is thinking of her child. Her little Magda too might be taken with a severe illness, might be racked by fever. In her delirium she would call for her mother. Yet not her soft hand but a stranger's would minister to her; her mother dare not come. Perhaps in her last battle with death her dim eyes would be half opened to seek those she had loved above all things, her hands would be stretched out to embrace the head whose first and last thought was for her child . . . in vain, in vain! And her last dying groan would be wrung from her by the pain that her little heart could not break at her mother's breast.

Ivan Hron's eyes grew dim at this thought, and as though their thoughts had met, he heard a deep sigh which rose from his wife's bosom.

He took her hand. "You are looking at that poor child, Magda, you are sorry for her . . ."

His wife did not answer; her eyes looked into vacancy, her eyelids trembled.

"Yet how happy this child is, all the same," Ivan continued almost in a whisper. "She is carefully nursed, her mother watches her like a guardian angel."

Two large tears ran down Magdalena's cheeks; she had not the courage to look at her husband.

"Listen, Magda," said Ivan, taking her hand, "it has long been my intention to tell you something; there are so many orphans who do not belong to a soul in this world, who are in want of what they most need, and do not know what it means to be really loved and cared for. And as we ourselves have not been so fortunate as to have a family of our own, and we have no children to consider, could we not adopt one of those lonely children who have no home? And it would be more lively for us, Magda. . . ."

Magda did not answer; but the heaving of her breast showed the deep emotion in her soul, and what a storm of thoughts and conflicts her husband's words had roused.

"You do not answer, Magda, you do not agree? You do not care about it?"

"Do as you wish." Her words were almost inaudible.

"Ah, I knew you would not thwart me, Magda," said Ivan gently. "And if you should be thinking about your people, believe me, in case I should die unexpectedly no one will be curtailed by this increase in our family. I have made provisions for everybody as well as you. Look," he continued eagerly, "some little boy who has neither father nor mother shall find them in us. Would you like me to look out for a curly little fellow like this one?"

Magda's hand was trembling in his. "As you like, Ivan; yes, I agree."

Ivan was silent, then he began again: "Or would you rather have a little girl? A little creature whose mind would begin to open out when she lived with us; she would soon get used to us and would see her parents in us . . . we could give her our names. You'd rather have a girl, wouldn't you, Magda? A girl is more domesticated; you could dress her, and make of her what you liked, give her mind its proper bent . . . yes, I think you would get more quickly used to a girl, wouldn't you?"

The young woman's eyes looked glassy, although the two tears on her cheeks had dried, but a fresh pain which would have no end was beginning to take possession of her soul. Her fixed eyes, unable to perceive anything in her immediate surroundings, looked into the far distance, and her heart went out in immeasurable sorrow, hunted to death. If ever she had dared to hope that the day might come when she could acknowledge little Magda, if ever a ray of hope had lighted up her soul . . . all that would be lost now. What she had felt for her own, what she would have done for her with her last breath, was now to be given to an unknown child. The place which she had dreamt of for the unfortunate little creature would never be taken by her. Oh, the pain of it! The awful punishment for a single moment of weakness, the endless atonement for the sin of another! Her Magda would now be really lost to her; she would be for ever excluded from her rightful place.

The thought of humbling herself before her husband and revealing her secret, flashed through her mind. But she forced it away from her. Should she, at the moment when he was thinking of doing good and giving a home and parents to some unfortunate being, crush him with her dreadful disclosure?

After a long pause, and without looking at him: "Yes, do so," she said in a whisper.

"You really mean it, and you don't even look at me?" said Hron as with a gentle reproach. "I know it is hard to speak of these things, but I am afraid there is no prospect of a change. But all the same, if you do not like the idea. . . ."

When later on Magda remembered this moment, she was conscious of having fought a hard battle with herself for the second time in her life, just as hard as that after which she had consented to accept Ivan's hand. But she now had the strength to turn to him, and look at him with her brimming eyes, while her hand gently returned the pressure of his right hand. She said firmly: "Not at all, I quite agree with you."

The subject was not mentioned between them again. The day was bright, and everything looked smiling, the rays of the July sun shone warm upon them, but they remained silent all day. The deep melancholy which had taken possession of her could not be banished from Magda's face. Hron at first tried to distract her, but ended by being lost in silent reflection too. For him also this afternoon's conversation had meant a hard

struggle. He had prepared himself for many days, and every time he had meant to begin, the words had stuck in his throat. But in spite of his serious mood, he had a feeling of deep satisfaction, and if he had been a more introspective man, he would have said to himself that he was really immensely happy.

After this conversation with his wife, Ivan became restless. He shortened the remainder of their trip, hurried from place to place, and left unvisited some in which he had meant to make a stay. He often secretly watched Magda, and saw how she was suffering. She mastered herself with all her strength, tried to conquer the apprehension which Ivan's intention had roused in her, and even made attempts to appear gay. Perhaps she secretly clung to the hope that something would prevent the plan at the last moment. But how could that be? She could not tell. If she were to change his mind in favour of her daughter, she would have to speak. Could that change possibly be in her child's and her own favour? Might she not be sent away with her unfortunate child at once? She could do nothing. And Ivan, who read her thoughts, became himself subject to depression. His nature, more robust than hers, was not affected as deeply as her sensitive soul, yet he became more and more anxious to put an end to this state of uncertainty. The solution of the problem was in his hand, and he fervently desired to solve it; yet when he thought of what it would mean, he trembled for Magda and for himself.

In Salzburg rainy weather set in, which gave him a pretext for returning to Prague without delay. Magda did not seem to care what they did; nothing had appealed to her on this journey, neither did she look forward to going home. Dull indifference had now taken possession of her. What did it matter whether she were away or at home? The situation was desperate in any case. There was no way out of the impasse. She strained all her senses to get hold of an idea, but none presented itself; not a single flash came to light up the heavy gloom of her horizon.

They were home again. Ivan Hron's leave had not yet expired. He went to his office to see whether there were news of any importance, but after he had settled that he need not resume his duties for another fortnight, he returned to his wife. On the next day he made preparations for another journey. "I have to attend to some business in the country, Magda," he said, "I want to settle it while I am on leave. But I shall be back in a couple of days or so, and if you like we can then go for another trip. Perhaps a favourable wind may blow me in the direction of your home. I may see your parents; but I am not sure."

When he took leave of her, with his bag in his hand, he remarked casually: "Well, Magda, if I should find a little orphan by the wayside, you would not mind my bringing her along? It would be best to get one from the country; all her former ties, whatever they might be, would then be severed, and she would begin a new life in Prague. If you should not take to her, we will send her back."

"Do as you think best," said Magda with resignation. "I am sure I shall approve of your choice; you are a man who can be trusted."

"If I succeed, I will write and let you know," said Hron, tenderly embracing his wife, and left the house.

Three days passed. Hron had not written. But on the morning of the fourth day she received a letter:

"DEAREST MAGDA, — I have found what I was looking for, a little girl without father and mother. She is not quite so small a child as you might fancy, but I hope you will take to her all the same. Meet us the day after to-morrow at the North Western Station at 1 P.M. Be sure to have dinner ready at once; we shall probably be hungry. Greatly looking forward to our meeting — Your

IVAN."

Magda went towards the station to meet her husband, with a heavy heart. She walked up and down the platform, and her breath stopped when she heard the whistle of the approaching train. Immovable, as though she were rooted to the spot, the young woman stood, her eyes only were moving and wandered from one carriage to another, seeking the one from which her husband would alight with the child. But the passengers, each one looking for the friends or relatives who would meet them, passed her; one carriage after another discharged its occupants, and at last the train was empty; the doors stood out like wooden wings, the engine hissed feebly. Ivan was nowhere to be seen. He had not come.

Magda stood a little while longer, waiting to see if her husband would appear after all; at last she wondered whether she had made a mistake in the time. Having asked some questions from uncommunicative officials, which were not answered any too willingly, she returned home. The thought that something might have happened to her husband did not occur to her. She thought that she might not have read his note carefully enough, or that he had made a mistake in the time. Besides, she was too much engrossed in other things. Her thoughts were far away in a remote little village in the North-east of Bohemia with her Magda . . . her Magda who did not know that her place would now be taken by another child.

Magda had gone up the front door steps of her house and was pressing the electric bell.

How lonely the house had felt while Ivan had been away!

The door was opened at once, and . . . by Ivan himself. She was taken aback, almost startled, so that he had to draw her into the hall. He kissed her and said: "You have had the trouble for nothing, Magda, forgive me. I altered my plans at the last moment, and we came by the main line. There was no time to let you know, so I was obliged to let you take a walk by yourself. But come in now, come and see. . . ."

"'We' came! Then she is here!"

Suddenly Magda's feet refused to move; she tried in vain to follow her husband. He gently put his arm round her shoulders and led her, so that she was obliged to move forward. Half-leading, half-drawing her, he took her as far as the dining-room door which he opened. When he spoke encouragingly to her once more, there was a slight tremor in his voice. "Come now, Magda," he said, "come and tell me if you are pleased with me." He pushed her gently forward without releasing his hold upon her.

Magda looked into the room, where a shy little girl was sitting on the sofa. She looked startled, and perhaps a little frightened after all the changes she had lived through during the last two days. Her large brown eyes were looking towards the door when she heard the voice of the man whom she had only so lately met for the first time. But when she saw Magda appear on the threshold, she sprang to her feet, her cheeks burned, and she cried: "Mummy!"

"Magda!"

Magdalena's voice was choked, the last syllable remained unspoken. The blood left her face, her body was swaying. She clutched the fingers of Ivan's right hand as though she were drowning; still she could not stand, and sank down on her knees which had given way beneath her.

"Magda," cried Hron, trying to hold her up, "pull yourself together, little mother."

Magda resisted. Not standing . . . only kneeling she could listen to the terrible things which a deceived husband must now speak.

But his arms lifted her up completely, and his right hand raised her head which had dropped on to her chest.

"Magda," he whispered, trembling all over, "be brave, don't frighten our little daughter."

He lifted her head almost by force, to look into her eyes. But she had closed them; a deathly pallor had spread over her face, her teeth were chattering as in a fever. She could hardly utter the words: "Who told you, Ivan, who told you?"

"Nobody told me." Hron passed his hand over her cold cheek. "I want you to be perfectly happy, my dearest child. Now, please go and welcome the other Magda, else she will begin to cry. Come, little daughter, give your mother courage."

The child hesitated for a moment, then she ran up to her mother, threw her arms round her body, and cried anxiously: "Mummy, Mummy, what is the matter with you?"

But Magda, before Ivan knew what she was doing, or could prevent it, had seized his right hand and pressed it to her lips. It was not till now that the truth flashed upon her. Ivan had brought this about, but not to accuse or punish her. Hot tears fell on his hands, and when at last he

could take her head in both his hands to kiss her, her whole soul looked in gratitude out of her brimming eyes.

"Ivan . . . Ivan," her lips trembled, "do you think my whole life will be enough in return for what you are doing for this fatherless child?"

"What? Fatherless!" Ivan cried gaily, so as not to break down himself, "she has had a father for two whole days . . . he has been found, he has come to claim her, here is documentary evidence . . . look here."

He put his hand in his breast pocket, drew forth a document and waved it over her head: "While I was about it I have brought Magda's christening certificate as well, so now we can enter her at the High School after the holidays. But enough of all this. The poor little thing is waiting to be kissed!"

In a moment the little girl was buried in her mother's arms.

Ivan looked with infinite love at his wife, whose face had suddenly grown crimson. After a little while he said: "Now, little woman, give the child something to eat, I believe she is famished. And after dinner you had better get her some clothes that she is fit to be seen in in a town . . . how nice it will be to have something to be busy about! And to-morrow, or the day after, we will go right away from Prague once more, and get used to our little family in some pretty hiding-place."

The Scandinavian Countries

INTRODUCTION

OF the four countries — Iceland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway — included under the term Scandinavian, only the last two are represented in this collection.

The early literature of Iceland, including the two great *Eddas* and numerous sagas, is especially rich in stories of many kinds. Most of these were composed and collected between the Ninth and the Fourteenth centuries, A.D.

Owing to the close relationship that has always existed between Iceland and the other Scandinavian countries, the Icelandic legends and chronicles have exercised considerable influence over the writers of these countries.

Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, all have literary traditions that can be traced back to the Middle Ages, but it can safely be said that not until the Eighteenth Century was there any serious or important effort on the part of writers to produce fiction. In the Nineteenth Century, however, all the Scandinavian lands produced novelists and tellers of tales, many of whom have become famous outside their native countries. In Denmark, for instance, there were Hans Christian Andersen, Meyer Goldschmidt, J. P. Jacobsen and Hermann Bang, not to mention the more recent writers; in Norway, Asbjörnson and Moe, writers and collectors of charming folk tales; Björnson and Kielland and Lie, and the moderns Hamsun and Bojer; while in Sweden the extraordinary Strindberg and the more recent Selma Lagerlöf, Hallström, Heidenstamm and Geijerstam have made Swedish fiction known throughout the world.

On the whole, the modern Scandinavians have specialised largely in the writing of fiction.

In the work of Björnson and Bang, the short novel was brought to a high point of artistic development.

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON

(1832–1910)

Björnson is one of the great national figures of Norway, and is considered one of the founders of modern Norwegian literature. As novelist, poet, dramatist, moralist and political leader, he exercised immeasurable power over his countrymen. His short novel, *Synnove Solbakken,* appeared in 1857. This was the first of a series of short novels, a type of fiction in which Björnson excelled. *The Bridal March* appeared in 1872.

The translation here used is anonymous. It appeared in *The Novels of Bjornstjerne Björnson,* edited by Edmund Gosse. It is reprinted by permission of the publisher, William Heinemann, Ltd., London, 1912.

THE BRIDAL MARCH

THERE lived last century, in one of the high-lying inland valleys of Norway, a fiddler, who has become in some degree a legendary personage. Of the tunes and marches ascribed to him, some are said to have been inspired by the Trolls, one he heard from the devil himself, another he made to save his life, &c., &c. But the most famous of all is a Bridal March; and *its* story does not end with the story of his life.

Fiddler Ole Haugen was a poor cottar high among the mountains. He had a daughter, Aslaug, who had inherited his cleverness. Though she could not play his fiddle, there was music in everything she did — in her talk, her singing, her walk, her dancing.

At the great farm of Tingvold, down in the valley, a young man had come home from his travels. He was the third son of the rich peasant owner, but his two elder brothers had been drowned in a flood, so the farm was to come to him. He met Aslaug at a wedding and fell in love with her. In those days it was an unheard-of thing that a well-to-do peasant of old family should court a girl of Aslaug's class. But this young fellow had been long away, and he let his parents know that he had made enough out in the world to live upon, and that if he could not have what he wanted at home, he would let the farm go. It was prophesied that this indifference to the claims of family and property would bring its own punishment. Some said that Ole Haugen had brought it about, by means only darkly hinted at.

So much is certain, that while the conflict between the young man and his parents was going on, Haugen was in the best of spirits. When the battle was over, he said that he had already made them a Bridal March, one that would never go out of the family of Tingvold — but woe to the girl, he added, whom it did not play to church as happy a bride as the cottar's daughter, Aslaug Haugen! And here again people talked of the influence of some mysterious evil power.

So runs the story. It is a fact that to this day the people of that mountain district have a peculiar gift of music and song, which then must have been greater still. Such a thing is not kept up without some one caring for and adding to the original treasure, and Ole Haugen was the man who did it in his time.

Tradition goes on to tell that just as Ole Haugen's Bridal March was the merriest ever heard, so the bridal pair that it played to church, that were met by it again as they came from the altar, and that drove home with its strain in their ears, were the happiest couple that had ever been seen. And though the race of Tingvold had always been a handsome race, and after this were handsomer than ever, it is maintained that none, before or after, could equal this particular couple.

With Ole Haugen legend ends, and now history begins. Ole's Bridal March kept its place in the house of Tingvold. It was sung, and hummed, and whistled, and fiddled, in the house and in the stable, in the field and on the mountain-side. The only child born of the marriage, little Astrid, was rocked and sung to sleep with it by mother, by father, and by servants, and it was one of the first things she herself learned. There was music in the race, and this bright little one had her full share of it, and soon could hum her parents' triumphal march, the talisman of her family, in quite a masterly way.

It was hardly to be wondered at that when she grew up, she too wished to choose her lover. Many came to woo, but at the age of twenty-three the rich and gifted girl was still single. The reason came out at last. In the house lived a quick-witted youth, whom Aslaug had taken in out of pity. He went by the name of the tramp or gipsy, though he was neither. But Aslaug was ready enough to call him so when she heard that Astrid and he were betrothed. They had pledged faith to each other in all secrecy out on the hill pastures, and had sung the bridal march together, she on the height, he answering from below.

The lad was sent away at once. No one could now show more pride of race than Aslaug, the poor cottar's daughter. Astrid's father called to mind what was prophesied when he broke the tradition of his family. Had it now come to a husband being taken in from the wayside? Where would it end? And the neighbours said much the same.

"The tramp," Knut by name, soon became well known to everyone, as he took to dealing in cattle on his own account. He was the first in

that part of the country to do it to any extent, and his enterprise had begun to benefit the whole district, raising prices, and bringing in capital. But he was apt to bring drinking bouts, and often fighting, in his train; and this was all that people talked of as yet; they had not begun to understand his capabilities as a business man.

Astrid was determined, and she was twenty-three, and her parents came to see that either the farm must go out of the family or Knut must come into it; through their own marriage they had lost the moral authority that might have stood them in good stead now. So Astrid had her way. One fine day the handsome, merry Knut drove with her to church. The strains of the family bridal march, her grandfather's masterpiece, were wafted back over the great procession, and the two seemed to be sitting humming it quietly, and very happy they looked. And everyone wondered how the parents looked so happy too, for they had opposed the marriage long and obstinately.

After the wedding Knut took over the farm, and the old people retired on their allowance. It was such a liberal one that people could not understand how Knut and Astrid were able to afford it; for though the farm was the largest in the district, it was not well-cultivated. But this was not all. Three times the number of work-people were taken on, and everything was started in a new way, with an outlay unheard of in these parts. Certain ruin was foretold. But "the tramp" — for his nickname had stuck to him — was as merry as ever, and seemed to have infected Astrid with his humour. The quiet, gentle girl became the lively, buxom wife. Her parents were satisfied. At last people began to understand that Knut had brought to Tingvold what no one had had there before, working capital! And along with it he had brought the experience gained in trading, and a gift of handling commodities and money, and of keeping servants willing and happy.

In twelve years one would hardly have known Tingvold again. House and outbuildings were different; there were three times as many work-people, they were three times as well off, and Knut himself, in his broadcloth coat, sat in the evenings and smoked his meerschaum pipe and drank his glass of toddy with the Captain and the Pastor and the Bailiff. To Astrid he was the cleverest and best man in the world, and she was fond of telling how in his young days he had fought and drunk just to get himself talked about, and to frighten her; "for he was so cunning!"

She followed him in everything except in leaving off peasant dress and customs; to these she always kept. Knut did not interfere with other people's ways, so this caused no trouble between them. He lived with his "set," and his wife saw to their entertainment, which was, however, modest enough, for he was too prudent a man to make unnecessary show or outlay of any kind. Some said that he gained more by the card-playing, and by the popularity this mode of life won for him, than all he laid out upon it, but this was probably pure malevolence.

They had several children, but the only one whose history concerns us is the eldest son, Endrid, who was to inherit the farm and carry on the honour of the house. He had all the good looks of his race, but not much in the way of brains, as is often the case with children of specially active-minded parents. His father soon observed this, and tried to make up for it by giving him a very good education. A tutor was brought into the house for the children, and when Endrid grew up he was sent to one of the agricultural training schools that were now beginning to flourish in Norway, and after that to finish off in town. He came home again a quiet young fellow, with a rather over-burdened brain and fewer town ways than his father had hoped for. But Endrid was a slow-witted youth.

The Pastor and the Captain, both with large families of daughters, had their eye on him. But if this was the reason of the increased attention they paid to Knut, they made a great mistake; the idea of a marriage between his son and a poor pastor's or captain's daughter, with no training to fit her for a rich farmer's wife, was so ridiculous to him that he did not even think it necessary to warn Endrid. And indeed no warning was needed, for the lad saw as well as his father that, though there was no need for his bringing more wealth into the family through his marriage, it would be of advantage if he could again connect it with one of equal birth and position. But, as ill-luck would have it, he was but an awkward wooer. The worst of it was that he began to get the name of being a fortune-hunter; and when once a young man gets this reputation, the peasants fight shy of him. Endrid soon noticed this himself; for though he was not particularly quick, to make up for it he was very sensitive. He saw that it did not improve his position that he was dressed like a townsman, and "had learning," as the country people said. The boy was sound at heart, and the results of the slights he met with was that by degrees he left off his town dress and town speech, and began to work on his father's great farm as a simple labourer. His father understood — he had begun to understand before the lad did — and he told his wife to take no notice. So they said nothing about marriage, nor about the change in Endrid's ways; only his father was more and more friendly to him, and consulted him in everything connected with the farm and with his other trade, and at last gave the management of the farm altogether into his hands. And of this they never needed to repent.

So the time passed till Endrid was thirty-one. He had been steadily adding to his father's wealth and to his own experience and independence; but had never made the smallest attempt at courtship; had not looked at a girl, either in their own district or elsewhere. And now his parents were beginning to fear that he had given up thoughts of it altogether. But this was not the case.

On a neighbouring farm lived in good circumstances another well-descended peasant family, that had at different times intermarried with

the race of Tingvold. A girl was growing up there whom Endrid had been fond of since she was a little child; no doubt he had quietly set his heart on her, for only six months after her confirmation he spoke. She was seventeen then and he thirty-one. Randi, that was the girl's name, did not know at first what to answer; she consulted her parents, but they said she must decide for herself. He was a good man, and from a worldly point of view she could not make a better match, but the difference in their ages was great, and she must know herself if she had the courage to undertake the new duties and cares that would come upon her as mistress of the large farm. The girl felt that her parents would rather have her say Yes than No, but she was really afraid. She went to his mother, whom she had always liked, and found to her surprise that she knew nothing. But the mother was so delighted with the idea that with all her might she urged Randi to accept him. "I'll help you," she said. "Father will want no allowance from the farm. He has all he needs, and he doesn't wish his children to be longing for his death. Things will be divided at once, and the little that we keep to live on will be divided too when we are gone. So you see there will be no trouble with us." Yes, Randi knew all along that Knut and Astrid were kind and nice. "And the boy," said Astrid, "is good and thoughtful about everything." Yes, Randi had felt that too; she was not afraid but that she would get on with him — if she were only capable enough herself!

A few days later everything was settled. Endrid was happy, and so were his parents; for this was a much respected family that he was marrying into, and the girl was both nice-looking and clever; there was not a better match for him in the district. The parents on both sides consulted together, and settled that the wedding should be just before harvest, as there was nothing to wait for.

The neighbourhood generally did not look on the engagement in the same light as the parties concerned. It was said that the pretty young girl had "sold herself." She was so young and hardly knew what marriage was, and the sly Knut had pushed forward his son before any other lovers had the chance. Something of this came to Randi's ears, but Endrid was so loving to her, and in such a quiet, almost humble way, that she would not break off with him; only it made her a little cool. Both his and her parents heard what was said, but took no notice.

Perhaps just because of this talk they determined to hold the wedding in great style, and this, for the same reason, was not unacceptable to Randi. Knut's friends, the Pastor, the Captain, and the Bailiff, with their large families, were to be among the guests, and some of them were to accompany the pair to church. On their account Knut wanted to dispense with the fiddlers — it was too old fashioned and peasant-like. But Astrid insisted that they must be played to church and home again with the Bridal March of her race. It had made her and her husband so happy;

they could not but wish to hear it again on their dear children's great festival day. There was not much sentiment about Knut; but he let his wife have her way. The bride's parents got a hint that they might engage the fiddlers, who were asked to play the old March, the family Bridal March, that had lain quiet now for a time, because this generation had worked without song.

But alas! on the wedding day the rain poured hard. The players had to wrap up their fiddles as soon as they had played the bridal party away from the farm, and they did not take them out again till they came within sound of the church-bells. Then a boy had to stand up at the back of the cart and hold an umbrella over them, and below it they sat huddled together and sawed away. The March did not sound like itself in such weather, naturally enough, nor was it a very merry-looking bridal procession that followed. The bridegroom sat with the high bridegroom's hat between his legs and a sou'-wester on his head; he had on a great fur coat, and he held an umbrella over the bride, who, with one shawl on the top of another, to protect the bridal crown and the rest of her finery, looked more like a wet hayrick than a human being. On they came, carriage after carriage, the men dripping, the women hidden away under their wrappings. It looked like a sort of bewitched procession, in which one could not recognise a single face; for there was not a face to be seen, nothing but huddled-up heaps of wool or fur. A laugh broke out among the specially large crowd gathered at the church on account of the great wedding. At first it was stifled, but it grew louder with each carriage that drove up. At the large house where the procession was to alight and the dresses were to be arranged a little for going into church, a haycart had been drawn out of the way, into the corner formed by the porch. Mounted on it stood a pedlar, a joking fellow, Aslak by name. Just as the bride was lifted down he called: "Devil take me if Ole Haugen's Bridal March is any good today!"

He said no more, but that was plenty. The crowd laughed, and though many of them tried not to let it be seen that they were laughing, it was clearly felt what all were thinking and trying to hide.

When they took off the bride's shawls they saw that she was as white as a sheet. She began to cry, tried to laugh, cried again — and then all at once the feeling came over her that she could not go into the church. Amidst great excitement she was laid on a bed in a quiet room, for such a violent fit of crying had seized her that they were much alarmed. Her good parents stood beside the bed, and when she begged them to let her go back, they said that she might do just as she liked. Then her eyes fell on Endrid. Any one so utterly miserable and helpless she had never seen before; and beside him stood his mother, silent and motionless, with the tears running down her face and her eyes fixed on Randi's. Then Randi raised herself on her elbow and looked straight in front of her for a little,

still sobbing after the fit of crying. "No, no!" she said, "I'm going to church." Once more she lay back and cried for a little, and then she got up. She said that she would have no more music, so the fiddlers were dismissed — and the story did not lose in their telling when they got among the crowd.

It was a mournful bridal procession that now moved on towards the church. The rain allowed of the bride and bridegroom hiding their faces from the curiosity of the onlookers till they got inside; but they felt that they were running the gauntlet, and they felt too that their own friends were annoyed at being laughed at as part of such a foolish procession.

The grave of the famous fiddler, Ole Haugen, lay close by the church-door. Without saying much about it, the family had always tended it, and a new head-board had been put up when the old one had rotted away below. The upper part of it was in the shape of a wheel, as Ole himself had desired. The grave was in a sunny spot, and was thickly overgrown with wild flowers. Every churchgoer that had ever stood by it had heard from some one or other how a botanist in government pay, making a collection of the plants and flowers of the valley and the mountains round about, had found flowers on that grave that did not grow anywhere else in the neighbourhood. And the peasants, who as a rule cared little about what they called "weeds," took pride in these particular ones — a pride mixed with curiosity and even awe. Some of the flowers were remarkably beautiful. But as the bridal pair passed the grave, Endrid, who was holding Randi's hand, felt that she shivered; immediately she began to cry again, walked crying into the church, and was led crying to her place. No bride within the memory of man had made such an entrance into that church.

She felt as she sat there that all this was helping to confirm the report that she had been sold. The thought of the shame she was bringing on her parents made her turn cold, and for a little she was able to stop crying. But at the altar she was moved again by some word of the priest's, and immediately the thought of all she had gone through that day came over her; and for the moment she had the feeling that never, no, never again, could she look people in the face, and least of all her own father and mother.

Things got no better as the day went on. She was not able to sit with the guests at the dinner-table; in the evening she was half coaxed, half forced to appear at supper, but she spoiled every one's pleasure, and had to be taken away to bed. The wedding festivities, that were to have gone on for several days, ended that evening. It was given out that the bride was ill.

Though neither those who said this nor those who heard it believed it, it was only too true. She was really ill, and she did not soon recover. One consequence of this was that their first child was sickly. The parents were not the less devoted to it from understanding that they themselves were

to a certain extent the cause of its suffering. They never left that child. They never went to church, for they had got shy of people. For two years God gave them the joy of the child, and then He took it from them.

The first thought that struck them after this blow was that they had been too fond of their child. That was why they had lost it. So, when another came, it seemed as if neither of them dared to show their love for it. But this little one, though it too was sickly at first, grew stronger, and was so sweet and bright that they could not restrain their feelings. A new, pure happiness had come to them; they could almost forget all that had happened. When this child was two years old, God took it too.

Some people seem to be chosen out by sorrow. They are the very people that seem to us to need it least, but at the same time they are those that are best fitted to bear trials and yet to keep their faith. These two had early sought God together; after this they lived as it were in His presence. The life at Tingvold had long been a quiet one; now the house was like a church before the priest comes in. The work went on perfectly steadily, but at intervals during the day Endrid and Randi worshipped together, communing with those "on the other side." It made no change in their habits that Randi, soon after their last loss, had a little daughter. The children that were dead were boys, and this made them not care so much for a girl. Besides, they did not know if they were to be allowed to keep her. But the health and happiness that the mother had enjoyed up to the time of the death of the last little boy, had benefited this child, who soon showed herself to be a bright little girl, with her mother's pretty face. The two lonely people again felt the temptation to be hopeful and happy in their child; but the fateful two years were not over, and they dared not. As the time drew near, they felt as if they had only been allowed a respite.

Knut and Astrid kept a good deal to themselves. The way in which the young people had taken things did not allow of much sympathy or consolation being offered them. Besides, Knut was too lively and worldly-minded to sit long in a house of mourning or to be always coming in upon a prayer meeting. He moved to a small farm that he had bought and let, but now took back into his own hands. There he arranged everything so comfortably and nicely for his dear Astrid, that people whose intention it was to go to Tingvold, rather stayed and laughed with him than went on to cry with his children.

One day when Astrid was in her daughter-in-law's house, she noticed how little Mildrid went about quite alone; it seemed as if her mother hardly dared to touch her. When the father came in, she saw the same mournful sort of reserve towards his own, only child. She concealed her thoughts, but when she got home to her own dear Knut, she told him how things stood at Tingvold, and added: "Our place is there now. Little Mildrid needs some one that dares to love her; pretty, sweet little child

that she is!" Knut was infected by her eagerness, and the two old people packed up and went home.

Mildrid was now much with her grandparents, and they taught her parents to love her. When she was five years old her mother had another daughter, who was called Beret; and after this Mildrid lived almost altogether with the old people. The anxious parents began once more to feel as if there might yet be pleasure for them in life, and a change in the popular feeling towards them helped them.

After the loss of the second child, though there were often the traces of tears on their faces, no one had ever seen them weep — their grief was silent. There was no changing of servants at Tingvold, that was one result of the peaceful, God-fearing life there; nothing but praise of master and mistress was ever heard. They themselves knew this, and it gave them a feeling of comfort and security. Relations and friends began to visit them again; and went on doing so, even though the Tingvold people made no return.

But they had not been at church since their wedding-day! They partook of the Communion at home, and held worship there. But when the second girl was born, they were so desirous to be her godparents themselves that they made up their minds to venture. They stood together at their children's graves; they passed Ole Haugen's without word or movement; the whole congregation showed them respect. But they continued to keep themselves very much to themselves, and a pious peace rested over their house.

One day in her grandmother's house little Mildrid was heard singing the Bridal March. Old Astrid stopped her work in a fright, and asked her where in the world she had learned that. The child answered: "From you, grandmother." Knut, who was sitting in the house, laughed heartily, for he knew that Astrid had a habit of humming it when she sat at work. But they both said to little Mildrid that she must never sing it when her parents were within hearing. Like a child, she asked "Why?" But to this question she got no answer. One evening she heard the new herd-boy singing it as he was cutting wood. She told her grandmother, who had heard it too. All grandmother said was: "He'll not grow old here!" — and sure enough he had to go next day. No reason was given; he got his wages and was sent about his business. Mildrid was so excited about this, that grandmother had to try to tell her the story of the Bridal March. The little eight year old girl understood it well enough, and what she did not understand then became clear to her later. It had an influence on her child-life, and especially her conduct towards her parents, that nothing else had or could have had.

She had always noticed that they liked quietness. It was no hardship to her to please them in this; they were so gentle, and talked so much and so sweetly to her of the children's great Friend in heaven, that it cast

a sort of charm over the whole house. The story of the Bridal March affected her deeply, and gave her an understanding of all that they had gone through. She carefully avoided recalling to them any painful memories, and showed them the tenderest affection, sharing with them their love of God, their truthfulness, their quietness, their industry. And she taught Beret to do the same.

In their grandfather's house the life that had to be suppressed at home got leave to expand. Here there was singing and dancing and play and story-telling. So the sisters' young days passed between devotion to their melancholy parents in the quiet house, and the glad life they were allowed to take part in at their grandfather's. The families lived in perfect understanding. It was the parents who told them to go to the old people and enjoy themselves, and the old people who told them to go back again, "and be sure to be good girls."

When a girl between the age of twelve and sixteen takes a sister between seven and eleven into her full confidence, the confidence is rewarded by great devotion. But the little one is apt to become too old for her years. This happened with Beret, while Mildrid only gained by being forbearing and kind and sympathetic — and she made her parents and grandparents happy.

There is no more to tell till Mildrid was in her fifteenth year; then old Knut died, suddenly and easily. There seemed almost no time between the day when he sat joking in the chimney-corner and the day when he lay in his coffin.

After this, grandmother's greatest pleasure was to have Mildrid sitting on a stool at her feet, as she had done ever since she was a little child, and to tell her stories about Knut, or else to get her to hum the Bridal March. As Astrid sat listening to it, she saw Knut's handsome dark head as she used to see it in her young days; she followed him out to the mountain-side, where he blew the March on his herd-boy's horn, she drove to church by his side — all his brightness and cleverness lived again for her!

But in Mildrid's soul a new feeling began to stir. Whilst she sat and sang for grandmother, she asked herself: "Will it ever be played for me?" The thought grew upon her, the March spoke to her of such radiant happiness. She saw a bride's crown glittering in the sunshine, and a long, bright future beyond that. Sixteen — and she asked herself: "Shall I, shall I ever have some one sitting beside me, with the Bridal March shining in his eyes? Only think, if father and mother were one day to drive with me in such a procession, with the people greeting us on every side, on to the house where mother was jeered at that day, past Ole Haugen's flower-covered grave, up to the altar, in a glory of happiness! Think what it would be if I could give father and mother that consolation!" And the child's heart swelled, imagining all this to herself, swelled with pride and with devotion to those dear parents who had suffered so much.

These were the first thoughts that she did not confide to Beret. Soon there were more. Beret, who was now eleven, noticed that she was left more to herself, but did not understand that she was being gradually shut out from Mildrid's confidence, till she saw another taken into her place. This was Inga, from the neighbouring farm, a girl of eighteen, their own cousin, newly betrothed. When Mildrid and Inga walked about in the fields, whispering and laughing, with their arms round each other, as girls love to go, poor Beret would throw herself down and cry with jealousy.

The time came on for Mildrid to be confirmed; she made acquaintance with other young people of her own age, and some of them began to come up to Tingvold on Sundays. Mildrid saw them either out of doors or in her grandmother's room. Tingvold had always been a forbidden, and consequently mysteriously attractive place to young people. But even now, only those with a certain quietness and seriousness of disposition went there, for it could not be denied that there was something subdued about Mildrid, that did not attract every one.

At this particular time there was a great deal of music and singing among the youths of the district. For some reason or other there are such periods, and these periods have their leaders. One of the leaders now was, curiously enough, again of the race of Haugen.

Amongst a people where once on a time, even though it were hundreds of years ago, almost every man and woman sought and found expression for their intensest feelings and experiences in song, and were able themselves to make the verses that gave them relief — amongst such a people the art can never quite die out. Here and there, even though it does not make itself heard, it must exist, ready on occasion to be awakened to new life. But in this district songs had been made and sung from time immemorial. It was by no mere chance that Ole Haugen was born here, and here became what he was. Now it was his grandson in whom the gift had reappeared.

Ole's son had been so much younger than the daughter who had married in the Tingvold family, that the latter, already a married woman, had stood godmother to her little brother. After a life full of changes, this son, as an old man, had come into possession of his father's home and little bit of land far up on the mountain-side; and, strangely enough, not till then did he marry. He had several children, among them a boy called Hans, who seemed to have inherited his grandfather's gifts — not exactly in the way of fiddle-playing, though he did play — but he sang the old songs beautifully and made new ones himself. People's appreciation of his songs was not a little added to by the fact that so few knew himself; there were not many that had even seen him. His old father had been a hunter, and while the boys were quite small, the old man took them out to the hillside and taught them to load and aim a gun. They always remembered how pleased he was when they were able to earn enough with

their shooting to pay for their own powder and shot. He did not live long after this, and soon after his death their mother died too, and the children were left to take care of themselves, which they managed to do. The boys hunted and the girls looked after the little hill farm. People turned to look at them when they once in a way showed themselves in the valley; they were so seldom there. It was a long, bad road down. In winter they occasionally came to sell or send off the produce of their hunting; in summer they were busy with the strangers. Their little holding was the highest lying in the district, and it became famed for having that pure mountain air which cures people suffering from their lungs or nerves, better than any yet discovered medicine; every year they had as many summer visitors, from town, and even from abroad, as they could accommodate. They added several rooms to their house, and still it was always full. So these brothers and sisters, from being poor, very poor, came to be quite well-to-do. Intercourse with so many strangers had made them a little different from the other country people — they even knew something of foreign languages. Hans was now twenty-seven. Some years before he had bought up his brothers' and sisters' shares, so that the whole place belonged to him.

Not one of the family had ever set foot in the house of their relations at Tingvold. Endrid and Randi Tingvold, though they had doubtless never put the feeling into words, could just as little bear to hear the name of Haugen as to hear the Bridal March. These children's poor father had been made to feel this, and in consequence, Hans had forbidden his brothers and sisters ever to go to the house. But the girls at Tingvold, who loved music, longed to make acquaintance with Hans, and when they and their girl friends were together, they talked more about the family at Haugen than about anything else. Hans's songs and tunes were sung and danced to, and they were for ever planning how they could manage to meet the young farmer of Haugen.

After this happy time of young companionship came Mildrid's confirmation. Just before it there was a quiet pause, and after it came another. Mildred, now about seventeen, spent the autumn almost alone with her parents. In spring, or rather summer, she was, like all the other girls after their confirmation, to go to the sœter in charge of cattle. She was delighted at the thought of this, especially as her friend Inga was to be at the next sœter.

At last her longing for the time to come grew so strong that she had no peace at home, and Beret, who was to acccompany her, grew restless too. When they got settled in the sœter Beret was quite absorbed in the new, strange life, but Mildrid was still restless. She had her busy times with the cattle and the milk, but there were long idle hours that she did not know how to dispose of. Some days she spent them with Inga, listening to her stories of her lover, but often she had no inclination to go

there. She was glad when Inga came to her, and affectionate, as if she wanted to make up for her faithlessness. She seldom talked to Beret, and often when Beret talked to her, answered nothing but Yes or No. When Inga came, Beret took herself off, and when Mildred went to see Inga, Beret went crying away after the cows, and had the herd-boys for company. Mildrid felt that there was something wrong in all this, but with the best will she could not set it right.

She was sitting one day near the sœter, herding the goats and sheep, because one of the herd-boys had played truant and she had to do his work. It was a warm midday; she was sitting in the shade of a hillock overgrown with birch and underwood; she had thrown off her jacket and taken her knitting in her hand, and was expecting Inga. Something rustled behind her. "There she comes," thought Mildred, and looked up.

But there was more noise than Inga was likely to make, and such a breaking and cracking among the bushes. Mildrid turned pale, got up, and saw something hairy and a pair of eyes below it — it must be a bear's head! She wanted to scream, but no voice would come; she wanted to run, but could not stir. The thing raised itself up — it was a tall, broad-shouldered man with a fur cap, a gun in his hand. He stopped short among the bushes and looked at her sharply for a second or two, then took a step forward, a jump, and stood in the field beside her. Something moved at her feet, and she gave a little cry; it was his dog, that she had not seen before.

"Oh dear!" she said; "I thought it was a bear breaking through the bushes, and I got such a fright!" And she tried to laugh.

"Well, it might almost have been that," said he, speaking in a very quiet voice; "Kvas and I were on the track of a bear; but now we have lost it; and if I have a 'Vardöger,' it is certainly a bear."

He smiled. She looked at him. Who can he be? Tall, broad-shouldered, wiry; his eyes restless, so that she could not see them rightly; besides, she was standing quite close to him, just where he had suddenly appeared before her with his dog and his gun.

She felt the inclination to say, "Go away!" but instead she drew back a few steps, and asked: "Who are you?" She was really frightened.

"Hans Haugen," answered the man rather absently: for he was paying attention to the dog, which seemed to have found the track of the bear again. He was just going to add, "Good-bye!" but when he looked at her she was blushing; cheeks, neck, and bosom crimson.

"What's the matter?" said he, astonished.

She did not know what to do or where to go, whether to run away or sit down.

"Who are you?" asked Hans in his turn.

Once again she turned crimson, for to tell him her name was to tell him everything.

"Who are you?" he repeated, as if it were the most natural question in the world, and deserved an answer.

And she could not refuse the answer, though she felt ashamed of herself, and ashamed of her parents, who had neglected their own kindred. The name had to be said. "Mildrid Tingvold," she whispered, and burst into tears.

It was true enough; the Tingvold people had given him little reason to care for them. Of his own free will he would scarcely have spoken to one of them. But he had never foreseen anything like this, and he looked at the girl in amazement. He seemed to remember some story of her mother having cried like that in church on her wedding-day. "Perhaps it's in the family," he thought, and turned to go. "Forgive me for having frightened you," he said, and took his way up the hillside after his dog.

By the time she ventured to look up he had just reached the top of the ridge, and there he turned to look at her. It was only for an instant, for at that moment the dog barked on the other side. Hans gave a start, held his gun in readiness, and hurried on. Mildrid was still gazing at the place where he had stood, when a shot startled her. Could that be the bear? Could it have been so near her?

Off she went, climbing where he had just climbed, till she stood where he had stood, shading her eyes with her hand, and — sure enough, there he was, half hidden by a bush, on his knees beside a huge bear! Before she knew what she was doing, she was down beside him. He gave her a smile of welcome, and explained to her, in his low voice, how it had happened that they had lost the track and the dog had not scented the animal till they were almost upon it. By this time she had forgotten her tears and her bashfulness, and he had drawn his knife to skin the bear on the spot. The flesh was of no value at this time; he meant to bury the carcass and take only the skin. So she held, and he skinned; then she ran down to the sœter for an axe and a spade; and although she still felt afraid of the bear, and it had a bad smell, she kept on helping him till all was finished. By this time it was long past twelve o'clock, and he invited himself to dinner at the sœter. He washed himself and the skin, no small piece of work, and then came in and sat beside her while she finished preparing the food.

He chatted about one thing and another, easily and pleasantly, in the low voice that seems to become natural to people who are much alone. Mildrid gave the shortest answers possible, and when it came to sitting opposite him at the table, she could neither speak nor eat, and there was often silence between them. When she had finished he turned round his chair and filled and lit his pipe. He too was quieter now, and presently he got up. "I must be going," he said, holding out his hand, "it's a long way home from here." Then added, in a still lower voice: "Do you sit every day where you were to-day?" He held her hand for a moment, expecting an answer; but she dared not look up, much less speak. Then she felt him

press her hand quickly. "Good-bye, then, and thank you!" he said in a louder tone, and before she could collect herself, she saw him, with the bearskin over his shoulder, the gun in his hand, and the dog at his side, striding away over the heather. There was a dip in the hills just there, and she saw him clear against the sky; his light, firm step taking him quickly away. She watched till he was out of sight, then came outside and sat down, still looking in the same direction.

Not till now was she aware that her heart was beating so violently that she had to press her hands over it. In a minute or two she lay down on the grass, leaning her head on her arm, and began to go carefully over every event of the day. She saw him start up among the bushes and stand before her, strong and active, looking restlessly round. She felt over again the bewilderment and the fright, and her tears of shame. She saw him against the sun, on the height; she heard the shot, and was again on her knees before him, helping him with the skinning of the bear. She heard once more every word that he said, in that low voice that sounded so friendly, and that touched her heart as she thought of it; she listened to it as he sat beside the hearth while she was cooking, and then at table with her. She felt that she had no longer dared to look into his face, so that at last she had made him feel awkward too; for he had grown silent. Then she heard him speak once again, as he took her hand; and she felt his clasp — felt it still, through her whole body. She saw him go away over the heather — away, away!

Would he ever come back? Impossible, after the way she had behaved. How strong, and brave, and self-reliant was everything she had seen of him, and how stupid and miserable all that he had seen of her, from her first scream of fright when the dog touched her, to her blush of shame and her tears; from the clumsy help she gave him, to her slowness in preparing the food. And to think that when he looked at her she was not able to speak; not even to say No, when he asked her if she sat under the hill every day — for she didn't sit there every day! Might not her silence then have seemed like an invitation to him to come and see? Might not her whole miserable helplessness have been misunderstood in the same way? What shame she felt now! She was hot all over with it, and she buried her burning face deeper and deeper in the grass. Then she called up the whole picture once more! all his excellences and her shortcomings; and again the shame of it all overwhelmed her.

She was still lying there when the sound of the bells told her that the cattle were coming home; then she jumped up and began to work. Beret saw as soon as she came that something had happened. Mildrid asked such stupid questions and gave such absurd answers, and altogether behaved in such an extraordinary way, that she several times just stopped and stared at her. When it came to supper-time, and Mildrid, instead of taking her place at the table, went and sat down outside, saying that she had just

had dinner, Beret was as intensely on the alert as a dog who scents game at hand. She took her supper and went to bed. The sisters slept in the same bed, and, as Mildrid did not come, Beret got up softly once or twice to look if her sister were still sitting out there, and if she were alone. Yes, she was there, and alone.

Eleven o'clock, and then twelve, and then one, and still Mildrid sat and Beret waked. She pretended to be asleep when Mildrid came at last, and Mildrid moved softly, so softly; but her sister heard her sobbing, and when she had got into bed she heard her say her usual evening prayer so sadly, heard her whisper: "O God, help me, help me!" It made Beret so unhappy that she could not get to sleep even now. She felt her sister restlessly changing from one position to another; she saw her at last giving it up, throwing aside the covering, and lying open-eyed, with her hands below her head, staring into vacancy. She saw and heard no more, for at last she fell asleep.

When she awoke next morning Mildred's place was empty. Beret jumped up; the sun was high in the sky; the cattle were away long ago. She found her breakfast set ready, took it hurriedly, and went out and saw Mildrid at work, but looking ill. Beret said that she was going to hurry after the cattle. Mildrid said nothing in answer, but gave her a glance as though of thanks. The younger girl stood a minute thinking, and then went off.

Mildrid looked round; yes, she was alone. She hastily put away the dishes, leaving everything else as it was. Then she washed herself and changed her dress, took her knitting, and set off up the hill.

She had not the new strength of the new day, for she had hardly slept or eaten anything for twenty-four hours. She walked in a dream, and knew nothing clearly till she was at the place where she had sat yesterday.

Hardly had she seated herself when she thought: "If he were to come and find me here, he would believe ——" She started up mechanically. There was his dog on the hillside. It stood still and looked at her, then rushed down to her, wagging its tail. Her heart stopped beating. There — there he stood, with his gun gleaming in the sun, just as he had stood yesterday. To-day he had come another way. He smiled to her, ran down, and stood before her. She had given a little scream and sunk down on the grass again. It was more than she could do to stand up; she let her knitting drop, and put her hands up to her face. He did not say a word. He lay down on the grass in front of her, and looked up at her, the dog at his side with its eyes fixed on him. She felt that though she was turning her head away, he could see her hot blush, her eyes, her whole face. She heard him breathing quickly; she thought she felt his breath on her hand. She did not want him to speak, and yet his silence was dreadful. She knew that he must understand why she was sitting there; and greater shame than this no one had ever felt. But it was not right of him, either, to have come, and still worse of him to be lying there.

Then she felt him take one of her hands and hold it tight, then the other, so that she had to turn a little that way; he drew her gently, but strongly and firmly towards him with eye and hand, till she was at his side, her head fallen on his shoulder. She felt him stroke her hair with one hand, but she dared not look up. Presently she broke into passionate weeping at the thought of her shameful behaviour.

"Yes, you may cry," said he, "but I will laugh; what has happened to us two is matter both for laughter and for tears."

His voice shook. And now he bent over her and whispered that the farther away he went from her yesterday the nearer he seemed to be to her. The feeling overmastered him so, that when he reached his little shooting cabin, where he had a German officer with him this summer, recruiting after the war, he left the guest to take care of himself, and wandered farther up the mountain. He spent the night on the heights, sometimes sitting, sometimes wandering about. He went home to breakfast, but away again immediately. He was twenty-eight now, no longer a boy, and he felt that either this girl must be his or it would go badly with him. He wandered to the place where they had met yesterday; he did not expect that she would be there again; but when he saw her, he felt that he must make the venture; and when he came to see that she was feeling just as he was — "Why, then" — and he raised her head gently. And she had stopped crying, and his eyes shone so that she had to look into them, and then she turned red and put her head down again.

He went on talking in his low, half-whispering voice. The sun shone through the treetops, the birches trembled in the breeze, the birds mingled their song with the sound of a little stream rippling over its stony bed.

How long the two sat there together, neither of them knew. At last the dog startled them. He had made several excursions, and each time had come back and lain down beside them again; but now he ran barking down the hill. They both jumped up and stood for a minute listening. But nothing appeared. Then they looked at each other again, and Hans lifted her up in his arms. She had not been lifted like this since she was a child, and there was something about it that made her feel helpless. When he looked up beaming into her face, she bent and put her arms round his neck — he was now her strength, her future, her happiness, her life itself — she resisted no longer.

Nothing was said. He held her tight; she clung to him. He carried her to the place where she had sat at first, and sat down there with her on his knee. She did not unloose her arms, she only bent her head close down to his so as to hide her face from him. He was just going to force her to let him look into it, when some one right in front of them called in a voice of astonishment: "Mildrid!"

It was Inga, who had come up after the dog. Mildrid sprang to her feet, looked at her friend for an instant, then went up to her, put one arm

round her neck, and laid her head on her shoulder. Inga put her arm round Mildrid's waist. "Who is he?" she whispered, and Mildrid felt her tremble, but said nothing. Inga knew who he was — knew him quite well — but could not believe her own eyes. Then Hans came slowly forward. "I thought you knew me," he said quietly; "I am Hans Haugen." When she heard his voice, Mildrid lifted her head. How good and true he looked as he stood there! He held out his hand; she went forward and took it, and looked at her friend with a flush of mingled shame and joy.

Then Hans took his gun and said good-bye, whispering to Mildrid: "You may be sure I'll come soon again!"

The girls walked with him as far as the sœter, and watched him, as Mildrid had done yesterday, striding away over the heather in the sunlight. They stood as long as they could see him; Mildrid, who was leaning on Inga, would not let her go; Inga felt that she did not want her to move or speak. From time to time one or the other whispered: "He's looking back!" When he was out of sight Mildrid turned round to Inga and said: "Don't ask me anything. I can't tell you about it!" She held her tight for a second, and then they walked towards the sœter-house. Mildrid remembered now how she had left all her work undone. Inga helped her with it. They spoke very little, and only about the work. Just once Mildrid stopped, and whispered: "Isn't he handsome?"

She set out some dinner, but could eat little herself, though she felt the need both of food and sleep. Inga left as soon as she could, for she saw that Mildrid would rather be alone. Then Mildrid lay down on her bed. She was lying, half asleep already, thinking over the events of the morning, and trying to remember the nicest things that Hans had said, when it suddenly occurred to her to ask herself what she had answered. Then it flashed upon her that during their whole meeting she had not spoken, not said a single word!

She sat up in bed and said to herself: "He could not have gone far till this must have struck him too — and what can he have thought? He must take me for a creature without a will, going about in a dream. How can he go on caring for me? Yesterday it was not till he had gone away from me that he found out he cared for me at all — what will he find out to-day?" she asked herself with a shiver of dread. She got up, went out, and sat down where she had sat so long yesterday.

All her life Mildrid had been accustomed to take herself to account for her behaviour; circumstances had obliged her to walk carefully. Now, thinking over what had happened these last two days, it struck her forcibly that she had behaved without tact, without thought, almost without modesty. She had never read or heard about anything happening like this; she looked at it from the peasant's point of view, and none take these matters more strictly than they. It is seemly to control one's feelings — it is honourable to be slow to show them. She, who had done this all her life,

and consequently been respected by every one, had in one day given herself to a man she had never seen before! Why, he himself must be the first to despise her! It showed how bad things were, that she dared not tell what had happened, not even to Inga!

With the first sound of the cow-bells in the distance came Beret, to find her sister on the bench in front of the sœter-house, looking half dead. Beret stood in front of her till she was forced to raise her head and look at her. Mildrid's eyes were red with crying, and her whole expression was one of suffering. But it changed to surprise when she saw Beret's face, which was scarlet with excitement.

"Whatever is the matter with you?" she exclaimed.

"Nothing!" answered Beret, standing staring fixedly at Mildrid, who at last looked away, and got up to go and attend to the cows.

The sisters did not meet again till supper, when they sat opposite to each other. Mildrid was not able to eat more than a few mouthfuls. She sat and looked absently at the others, oftenest at Beret, who ate on steadily, gulping down her food like a hungry dog.

"Have you had nothing to eat to-day?" asked Mildrid.

"No!" answered Beret, and ate on.

Presently Mildrid spoke again: "Have you not been with the herds then?"

"No!" answered her sister and both of the boys. Before them Mildrid would not ask more, and afterwards her own morbid reflections took possession of her again, and along with them the feeling that she was no fit person to be in charge of Beret. This was one more added to the reproaches she made to herself all that long summer evening and far into the night.

There she sat, on the bench by the door, till the blood-red clouds changed gradually to cold grey, no peace and no desire for sleep coming to her. The poor child had never before been in real distress. Oh, how she prayed! She stopped and she began again; she repeated prayers that she had learned, and she made up petitions of her own. At last, utterly exhausted, she went to bed.

There she tried once more to collect her thoughts for a final struggle with the terrible question, Should she give him up or not? But she had no strength left; she could only say over and over again: "Help me, O God! help me!" She went on like this for a long time, sometimes saying it to herself, sometimes out loud. All at once she got such a fright that she gave a loud scream. Beret was kneeling up in bed looking at her; her sparkling eyes, hot face, and short breathing showing a terrible state of excitement.

"Who is he?" she whispered, almost threateningly.

Mildrid, crushed by her self-torture, and worn out in soul and body, could not answer; she began to cry.

"Who is he?" repeated the other, closer to her face; "you needn't try to hide it any longer; I was watching you to-day the whole time!"

Mildrid held up her arms as if to defend herself, but Beret beat them back, looked straight into her eyes, and again repeated, "Who is he, I say?"

"Beret, Beret!" moaned Mildrid; "have I ever been anything but kind to you since you were a little child? Why are you so cruel to me now that I am in trouble?"

Then Beret, moved by her tears, let go her arms; but her short hard breathing still betrayed her excitement. "Is it Hans Haugen?" she whispered.

There was a moment of breathless suspense, and then Mildrid whispered back: "Yes" —— and began to cry again.

Beret drew down her arms once more; she wanted to see her face. "Why did you not tell me about it, Mildrid?" she asked, with the same fierce eagerness.

"Beret, I didn't know it myself. I never saw him till yesterday. And as soon as I saw him I loved him, and let him see it, and that is what is making me so unhappy, so unhappy that I feel as if I must die of it!"

"You never saw him before yesterday?" screamed Beret, so astonished that she could hardly believe it.

"Never in my life!" replied Mildrid. "Isn't it shameful, Beret?"

But Beret threw her arms round her sister's neck, and kissed her over and over again.

"Dear, sweet Mildred, I'm so glad!" she whispered, now radiant with joy. "I'm so glad, so glad!" and she kissed her once more. "And you'll see how I can keep a secret, Mildrid!" She hugged her to her breast, but sat up again, and said sorrowfully: "And you thought I couldn't do it; O Mildrid! not even when it was about you!"

And now it was Beret's turn to cry. "Why have you put me away? Why have you taken Inga instead of me? You've made me dreadfully unhappy, Mildrid! O Mildrid, you don't know how I love you!" and she clung to her. Then Mildred kissed her, and told her that she had done it without thinking what she was doing, but that now she would never again put her aside, and would tell her everything, because she was so good and true and faithful.

The sisters lay for a little with their arms round each other; then Beret sat up again; she wanted to look into her sister's face in the light of the summer night, that was gradually taking a tinge of red from the coming dawn. Then she burst out with: "Mildrid, how handsome he is! How did he come? How did you see him first? What did he say? Do tell me about it!"

And Mildrid now poured out to her sister all that a few hours ago it had seemed to her she could never tell to anybody. She was sometimes

interrupted by Beret's throwing her arms round her and hugging her, but she went on again with all the more pleasure. It seemed to her like a strange legend of the woods. They laughed and they cried. Sleep had gone from them both. The sun found them still entranced by this wonderful tale — Mildrid lying down or resting on one elbow and talking, Beret kneeling beside her, her mouth half open, her eyes sparkling, from time to time giving a little cry of delight.

They got up together and did their work together, and when they had finished, and for the sake of appearances taken a little breakfast, they prepared for the meeting with Hans. He was sure to come soon! They dressed themselves out in their best, and went up to Mildrid's place on the hill. Beret showed where she had lain hidden yesterday. The dog had found her out, she said, and paid her several visits. The weather was fine to-day too, though there were some clouds in the sky. The girls found plenty to say to each other, till it was about the time when Hans might be expected. Beret ran once or twice up to the top of the hill, to see if he were in sight, but there was no sign of him. Then they began to grow impatient, and at last Mildrid got so excited that Beret was frightened. She tried to soothe her by reminding her that Hans was not his own master; that he had left the German gentleman two whole days to fish and shoot alone, and prepare food for himself; and that he would hardly dare to leave him a third. And Mildred acknowledged that this might be so.

"What do you think father and mother will say to all this?" asked Beret, just to divert Mildrid's thoughts. She repented the moment the words were uttered. Mildrid turned pale and stared at Beret, who stared back at her. Beret wondered if her sister had never thought of this till now, and said so. Yes; she had thought of it, but as of something very far off. The fear of what Hans Haugen might think of her, the shame of her own weakness and stupidity, had so occupied her mind that they had left no room for anything else. But now things suddenly changed round, and she could think of nothing but her parents.

Beret again tried to comfort her. Whenever father and mother saw Hans, they would feel that Mildrid was right — they would never make her unhappy who had given them their greatest happiness. Grandmother would help her. No one could say a word against Hans Haugen, and *he* would never give her up! Mildrid heard all this, but did not take it in, for she was thinking of something else, and to get time to think it out rightly, she asked Beret to go and prepare the dinner. And Beret walked slowly away, looking back several times.

Mildrid wanted to be left alone a little to make up her mind whether she should go at once and tell her parents. It seemed a terrible matter to her in her excited, exhausted state. She felt now that it would be a sin if she saw Hans again without their knowledge. She had done very

wrong in engaging herself to him without having their consent; but she had been in a manner surprised into that; it had come about almost without her will. Her duty now, though, was clearly to go and tell them.

She rose to her feet, with a new light in her eyes. She would do what was right. Before Hans stood there again, her parents should know all. "That's it!" she said, aloud, as if some one were there, and then hurried down to the sœter to tell Beret. But Beret was nowhere to be seen. "Beret! Beret!" shouted Mildrid, but only the echoes gave answer. Excited Mildrid was already, but now she got frightened too. Beret's great eyes, as she asked: "What do you think father and mother will say to this?" seemed to grow ever greater and more threatening. Surely *she* could never have gone off to tell them? Yet it would be just like her hasty way to think she would settle the thing at once, and bring comfort to her sister. To be sure that was it! And if Beret reached home before her, father and mother would get a wrong idea of everything!

Off Mildrid went, down the road that led to the valley. She walked unconsciously faster and faster, carried away by ever-increasing excitement; till her head began to turn and her breathing to get oppressed. She had to sit down for a rest. Sitting did not seem to help her, so she stretched herself out, resting her head on her arm, and lay there, feeling forsaken, helpless, almost betrayed — by affection it was true — but still betrayed.

In a few moments she was asleep! For two days and nights she had hardly slept or eaten; and she had no idea of the effect this had had on her mind and body — the child who till now had eaten and slept so regularly and peacefully in her quiet home. How was it possible that she could understand anything at all of what had happened to her? All that she had been able to give to her affectionate but melancholy parents out of her heart's rich store of love, was a kind of watchful care; in her grandmother's brighter home longings for something more had often come over her, but there was nothing even there to satisfy them. So now when love's full spring burst upon her, she stood amidst its rain of blossoms frightened and ashamed.

Tormented by her innocent conscience, the poor tired child had to run a race with herself till she fell — now she slept, caressed by the pure mountain breeze.

Beret had not gone home, but away to fetch Hans Haugen. She had far to go, and most of the way was unknown to her. It went first by the edge of a wood, and then higher over bare flats, not quite safe from wild animals, which she knew had been seen there lately. But she went on for Hans really must come. If he did not, she was sure things would go badly with Mildrid; she seemed so changed to-day.

In spite of her anxiety about Mildrid, Beret's heart was light, and she stepped merrily on, her thoughts running all the time on this wonderful

adventure. She could think of no one better or grander than Hans Haugen, and none but the very best was good enough for Mildrid. There was nothing whatever to be surprised at in Mildrid's giving herself up to him at once; just as little as in his at once falling in love with her. If father and mother could not be brought to understand this, they must just be left to do as they chose, and the two must fight their own battle as her great-grandparents had done, and her grandparents too — and she began to sing the old Bridal March. Its joyful tones sounded far over the bare heights and seemed to die away among the clouds.

When she got right on the top of the hill she was crossing, she stood and shouted "Hurrah!" From here she could see only the last strip of cultivated land on the farther side of their valley; and on this side the upper margin of the forest, above it stretches of heather, and where she stood, nothing but boulders and flat rocks. She flew from stone to stone in the light air. She knew that Hans's hut lay in the direction of the snow mountain whose top stood out above all the others, and presently she thought that she must be getting near it. To get a better look around she climbed up on to an enormous stone, and from the top of it she saw a mountain lake just below. Whether it was a rock or a hut she saw by the water's edge she could not be sure; one minute it looked like a hut, the next like a big stone. But she knew that his cabin lay by a mountain lake. Yes, that must be it, for there came a boat rowing round the point. Two men were in the boat — they must be Hans and the German officer. Down she jumped and off again. But what had looked so near was really far off, and she ran and ran, excited by the thought of meeting Hans Haugen.

Hans sat quietly in his boat with the German, ignorant of all the disturbance he had caused. *He* had never known what it was to be frightened; nor had he ever till now known the feeling of being in love. As soon as he did feel it, it was intolerable to him until he had settled the matter. Now it was settled, and he was sitting there setting words to the Bridal March!

He was not much of a poet, but he made out something about their ride to church, and the refrain of every verse told of their meeting in the wood. He whistled and fished and felt very happy; and the German fished away quietly and left him in peace.

A halloo sounded from the shore, and both he and the bearded German looked up and saw a girl waving. They exchanged a few words and rowed ashore. Hans jumped out and tied up the boat; and they lifted out the guns, coats, fish, and fishing tackle; the German went away towards the cabin, but Hans with his load came up to Beret, who was standing on a stone a little way off.

"Who are you?" he asked gently.

"Beret, Mildrid's sister," she answered, blushing, and he blushed too. But the next moment he turned pale.

"Is there anything the matter?"

"No! just that you must come. She can't bear to be left alone just now."

He stood a minute and looked at her, then turned and went towards the hut. The German was standing outside, hanging up his fishing tackle; Hans hung up his, and they spoke together, and then went in. Ever since Beret's halloo, two dogs, shut up in the cabin, had been barking with all their might. When the men opened the door they burst out, but were at once sternly called back. It was some time before Hans came out again. He had changed his clothes, and had his gun and dog with him. The German gentleman came to the door, and they shook hands as if saying good-bye for a considerable time. Hans came up quickly to Beret.

"Can you walk fast?" he asked.

"Of course I can."

And off they went, she running, the dog far ahead.

Beret's message had entirely changed the current of Hans's thoughts. It had never occurred to him before that Mildrid might not have the same happy, sure feeling about their engagement that he had. But now he saw how natural it was that she should be uneasy about her parents; and how natural, too, that she should feel alarmed by the hurried rush in which everything had come about. He understood it so well now that he was perfectly astonished at himself for not having thought of it before — and on he strode.

Even on him the suddenness of the meeting with Mildrid, and the violence of their feelings, had at first made a strange impression; what must she, a child, knowing nothing but the quiet reserve of her parents' house, have felt, thus launched suddenly on the stormy sea of passion! — and on he strode.

While he was marching along, lost in these reflections, Beret was trotting at his side, always, when she could, with her face turned towards his. Now and then he had caught a glimpse of her big eyes and flaming cheeks; but his thoughts were like a veil over his sight; he saw her indistinctly, and then suddenly not at all. He turned round; she was a good way behind, toiling after him as hard as she could. She had been too proud to say that she could not keep up with him any longer. He stood and waited till she made up to him, breathless, with tears in her eyes. "Ah! I'm walking too fast," and he held out his hand. She was panting so that she could not answer. "Let us sit down a little," he said, drawing her to him; "Come!" and he made her sit close to him. If possible she got redder than before, and did not look at him; and she drew breath so painfully that it seemed as if she were almost choking. "I'm so thirsty!" was the first thing she managed to say. They rose and he looked round, but there was no stream near. "We must wait till we get a little farther on," he said; "and anyhow it wouldn't be good for you to drink just now."

So they sat down again, she on a stone in front of him.

"I ran the whole way," she said, as if to excuse herself — and presently added, "and I have had no dinner," and after another pause — "and I didn't sleep last night."

Instead of expressing any sympathy with her, he asked sharply: "Then I suppose Mildrid did not sleep last night either? And she has not eaten, I saw that myself, not for" — he thought a little — "not for ever so long."

He rose. "Can you go on now?"

"I think so."

He took her hand, and they set off again at a tremendous pace. Soon he saw that she could not keep it up, so he took off his coat, gave it to her to hold, and lifted her up and carried her. She did not want him to do it, but he just went easily off with her, and Beret held on by his neckerchief, for she dared not touch him. Soon she said that she had got her breath and could run quite well again, so he put her down, took his coat and hung it over his gun — and off they went! When they came to a stream they stopped and rested a little before she took a drink. As she got up he gave her a friendly smile, and said: "You're a good little one."

Evening was coming on when they reached the sœter. They looked in vain for Mildrid, both there and at her place on the hillside. Their calls died away in the distance, and when Hans noticed the dog standing snuffing at something they felt quite alarmed. They ran to look — it was her little shawl. At once Hans set the dog to seek the owner of the shawl. He sprang off, and they after him, across the hill and down on the other side, towards Tingvold. Could she have gone home? Beret told of her own thoughtless question and its consequences, and Hans said he saw it all. Beret began to cry.

"Shall we go after her or not?" said Hans.

"Yes, yes!" urged Beret, half distracted. But first they would have to go to the next sœter, and ask their neighbours to send some one to attend to the cows for them. While they were still talking about this and at the same time following the dog, they saw him stop and look back, wagging his tail. They ran to him, and there lay Mildrid!

She was lying with her head on her arm, her face half buried in the heather. They stepped up gently; the dog licked her hands and cheek, and she stretched herself and changed her position, but slept on. "Let her sleep!" whispered Hans; "and you go and put in the cows. I hear the bells." As Beret was running off he went after her. "Bring some food with you when you come back," he whispered. Then he sat down a little way from Mildrid, make the dog lie down beside him, and sat and held him to keep him from barking.

It was a cloudy evening. The near heights and the mountain-tops were grey; it was very quiet; there was not even a bird to be seen. He sat or

lay, with his hand on the dog. He had soon settled what to arrange with Mildrid when she awoke. There was no cloud in their future; he lay quietly looking up into the sky. He knew that their meeting was a miracle. God Himself had told him that they were to go through life together.

He fell to working away at the Bridal March again, and the words that came to him now expressed the quiet happiness of the hour.

It was about eight o'clock when Beret came back, bringing food with her. Mildrid was still sleeping. Beret set down what she was carrying, looked at them both for a minute, and then went and sat down a little way from them. Nearly an hour passed, Beret getting up from time to time to keep herself from falling asleep. Soon after nine Mildrid awoke. She turned several times, at last opened her eyes, saw where she was lying, sat up, and noticed the others. She was still bewildered with sleep, so that she did not take in rightly where she was or what she saw, till Hans rose and came smiling towards her. Then she held out her hands to him.

He sat down beside her:

"You've had a sleep now, Mildrid?"

"Yes, I've slept now."

"And you're hungry?"

"Yes, I'm hungry ——" and Beret came forward with the food. She looked at it and then at them. "Have I slept long?" she asked.

"Well, it's almost nine o'clock; look at the sun!"

Not till now did she begin to remember everything.

"Have you sat here long?"

"No, not very long — but you must eat!" She began to do so. "You were on your way down to the valley?" asked Hans gently, with his head nearer hers. She blushed and whispered, "Yes."

"To-morrow, when you've really had a good sleep and rest, we'll go down together."

Her eyes looked into his, first in surprise, then as if she were thanking him, but she said nothing.

After this she seemed to revive; she asked Beret where *she* had been, and Beret told that she had gone to fetch Hans, and he told all the rest. Mildrid ate and listened, and yielded gradually once again to the old fascination. She laughed when Hans told her how the dog had found her, and had licked her face without wakening her. He was at this moment greedily watching every bite she took, and she began to share with him.

As soon as she had finished, they went slowly towards the sœter — and Beret was soon in bed. The two sat on the bench outside the door. Small rain was beginning to fall, but the broad eaves kept them from feeling it. The mist closed round the sœter, and shut them in in a sort of magic circle. It was neither day nor night, but dark rather than light. Each softly spoken word brought more confidence into their talk. Now for the

first time they were really speaking to each other. He asked her so humbly to forgive him for not having remembered that she must feel differently from him, and that she had parents who must be consulted. She confessed her fear, and then she told him that he was the first real, strong, self-reliant man she had ever known, and that this, and other things she had heard about him, had —— she would not go on.

But in their trembling happiness everything spoke, to the slightest breath they drew. That wonderful intercourse began of soul with soul, which in most cases precedes and prepares for the first embrace, but with these two came after it. The first timid questions came through the darkness, the first timid answers found their way back. The words fell softly, like spirit sounds on the night air. At last Mildrid took courage to ask hesitatingly if her behaviour had not sometimes struck him as very strange. He assured her that he had never thought it so, never once. Had he not noticed that she had not said one word all the time they were together yesterday? No, he had not noticed that. Had he not wondered at her going off down to her parents? No, he had thought it only right of her. Had he not thought (for a long time she would not say this, but at last the words came, in a whisper, with her face turned away), had he not thought that she had let things go too quickly? No, he only thought how beautifully everything had happened. But what had he thought of the way she had cried at their first meeting? Well, at the time it had puzzled him, but now he understood it, quite well — and he was glad she was like that.

All these answers made her so happy that she felt she wanted to be alone. And as if he had guessed this, he got up quietly and said that now she must go to bed. She rose. He nodded and went off slowly towards the shed where he was to sleep; she hurried in, undressed, and when she had got into bed she folded her hands and thanked God. Oh, how she thanked Him! Thanked Him for Hans's love, and patience, and kindness — she had not words enough! Thanked Him for all, all, everything — even for the suffering of the last two days — for had it not made the joy all the greater? Thanked Him for their having been alone up there at this time, and prayed Him to be with her to-morrow when she went down to her parents, then turned her thoughts again to Hans, and gave thanks for him once more, oh, how gratefully!

When she came out of the sœter house in the morning, Beret was still sleeping. Hans was standing in the yard. He had been punishing the dog for rousing a ptarmigan, and it was now lying fawning on him. When he saw Mildrid he let the dog out of disgrace; it jumped up on him and her, barked and caressed them, and was like a living expression of their own bright morning happiness. Hans helped Mildrid and the boys with the morning work. By the time they had done it all and were ready to sit down to breakfast, Beret was up and ready too. Every time Hans looked

at her she turned red, and when Mildrid after breakfast stood playing with his watch chain while she spoke to him, Beret hurried out, and was hardly to be found when it was time for the two to go.

"Mildrid," said Hans, coming close to her and walking slowly, when they had got on a little way, "I have been thinking about something that I didn't say to you yesterday." His voice sounded so serious that she looked up into his face. He went on slowly, without looking at her; "I want to ask you if — God granting that we get each other — if you will go home with me after the wedding and live at Haugen."

She turned red, and presently answered evasively:

"What will father and mother say to that?"

He walked on without answering for a minute, and then said:

"I did not think that mattered so much, if we two were agreed about it."

This was the first time he had said a thing that hurt her. She made no reply. He seemed to be waiting for one, and when none came, added gently:

"I wanted us two to be alone together, to get accustomed to each other."

Now she began to understand him better, but she could not answer. He walked on as before, not looking at her, and now quite silent. She felt uneasy, stole a glance at him, and saw that he had turned quite pale.

"Hans!" she cried, and stood still without being conscious of doing it. Hans stopped too, looked quickly at her, and then down at his gun, which he was resting on the ground and turning in his hand.

"Can you not go with me to my home?" His voice was very low, but all at once he looked her straight in the face.

"Yes, I can!" she answered quickly. Her eyes looked calmly into his, but a faint blush came over her cheeks. He changed his gun into his left hand, and held out the right to her.

"Thank you!" he whispered, holding hers in a firm clasp: Then they went on.

She was brooding over one thought all the time, and at last could not keep it in: "You don't know my father and mother."

He went on a little before he answered: "No, but when you come and live at Haugen, I'll have time to get to know them."

"They are so good!" added Mildrid.

"So I have heard from every one." He said this decidedly, but coldly.

Before she had time to think or say anything more, he began to tell about *his* home, his brothers and sisters, and their industry, affectionateness, and cheerfulness; about the poverty they had raised themselves from; about the tourists who came and all the work they gave; about the house, and especially about the new one he would now build for her and himself. She was to be the mistress of the whole place — but they would help her in everything; they would all try to make her life happy, he not

least. As he talked they walked on faster; he spoke warmly, came closer to her, and at last they walked hand in hand.

It could not be denied that his love for his home and his family made a strong impression on her, and there was a great attraction in the newness of it all; but behind this feeling lay one of wrong-doing towards her parents, her dear, kind parents. So she began again: "Hans! mother is getting old now, and father is older; they have had a great deal of trouble — they need help; they've worked so hard, and ——" she either would not or could not say more.

He walked slower and looked at her, smiling. "Mildrid, you mean that they have settled to give you the farm?"

She blushed, but did not answer.

"Well, then — we'll let that alone till the time comes. When they want us to take their places, it's for them to ask us to do it." He said this very gently and tenderly, but she felt what it meant. Thoughtful of others, as she always was, and accustomed to consider their feelings before her own, she yielded in this too. But very soon they came to where they could see Tingvold in the valley below them. She looked down at it, and then at him, as if it could speak for itself.

The big sunny fields on the hill slope, with the wood encircling and sheltering them, the house and farm buildings a little in the shadow, but big and fine — it all looked so beautiful. The valley, with its rushing, winding river, stretched away down beyond, with farm after farm in the bottom and on its slopes on both sides — but none, not one to equal Tingvold — none so fertile or so pleasant to the eye, none so snugly sheltered, and yet commanding the whole valley. When she saw that Hans was struck by the sight, she reddened with joy.

"Yes," he said, in answer to her unspoken question — "yes, it is true; Tingvold is a fine place; it would be hard to find its equal."

He smiled and bent down to her. "But I care more for you, Mildrid, than for Tingvold; and perhaps — you care more for me than for Tingvold?"

When he took it this way she could say no more. He looked so happy too; he sat down, and she beside him.

"Now I'm going to sing something for you," he whispered.

She felt glad. "I've never heard you sing," she said.

"No, I know you have not; and though people talk about my singing, you must not think it's anything very great. There's only this about it, that it comes upon me sometimes, and then I *must* sing."

He sat thinking for a good while, and then he sang her the song that he had made for their own wedding to the tune of her race's Bridal March. Quite softly he sang it, but with such exultation as she had never heard in any voice before. She looked down on her home, the house she was to drive away from on that day; followed the road with her eyes down

to the bridge across the river, and along on the other side right up to the church, which lay on a height, among birch-trees, with a group of houses near it. It was not a very clear day, but the subdued light over the landscape was in sympathy with the subdued picture in her mind. How many hundred times had she not driven that road in fancy, only she never knew with whom! The words and the tune entranced her; the peculiar warm, soft voice seemed to touch the very depths of her being; her eyes were full, but she was not crying; nor was she laughing. She was sitting with her hand on his, now looking at him, now over the valley, when she saw smoke beginning to rise from the chimney of her home; the fire was being lit for making the dinner. This was an omen; she turned to Hans and pointed. He had finished his song now, and they sat still and looked.

Very soon they were on their way down through the birch wood, and Hans was having trouble with the dog, to make him keep quiet. Mildrid's heart began to throb. Hans arranged with her that he would stay behind, but near the house; it was better that she should go in first alone. He carried her over one or two marshy places, and he felt that her hands were cold. "Don't think of what you're to say," he whispered; "just wait and see how things come." She gave no sound in answer, nor did she look at him.

They came out of the wood — the last part had been big dark fir-trees, among which they had walked slowly, he quietly telling her about her great-grandfather's wooing of his father's sister, Aslaug; an old, strange story, which she only half heard, but which all the same helped her — came out of the wood into the open fields and meadows; and he became quiet too. Now she turned to him, and her look expressed such a great dread of what was before her that it made him feel wretched. He found no words of encouragement; the matter concerned him too nearly. They walked on a little farther, side by side, some bushes between them and the house concealing them from its inhabitants. When they got so near that he thought she must now go on alone, he whistled softly to the dog, and she took this as the sign that they must part. She stopped and looked utterly unhappy and forlorn; he whispered to her: "I'll be praying for you here, Mildrid — and I'll come when you need me." She gave him a kind of distracted look of thanks; she was really unable either to think or to see clearly. Then she walked on.

As soon as she came out from the bushes she saw right into the big room of the main building — right through it — for it had windows at both ends, one looking up towards the wood and one down the valley. Hans had seated himself behind the nearest bush, with the dog at his side, and he too could see everything in the room; at this moment there was no one in it. Mildrid looked back once when she came to the barn, and he nodded to her. Then she went round the end of the barn, into the yard.

Everything stood in its old, accustomed order, and it was very quiet. Some hens were walking on the barn-steps. The wooden framework for the stacks had been brought out and set up against the storehouse wall since she was there last; that was the only change she saw. She turned to the right to go first into grandmother's house, her fear tempting her to take this little respite before meeting her parents; when, just between the two houses, at the wood-block, she came on her father, fitting a handle to an axe. He was in his knitted jersey with the braces over it, bareheaded, his thin long hair blowing in the breeze that was beginning to come up from the valley. He looked well, and almost cheerful at his work, and she took courage at the sight. He did not notice her, she had come so quietly and cautiously over the flagstones.

"Good morning!" she said in a low voice.

He looked at her in surprise for a moment.

"Is that you, Mildrid? Is there anything the matter?" he added hastily, examining her face.

"No," she said, and blushed a little. But he kept his eyes on hers, and she did not dare to look up.

Then he put down the axe, saying:

"Let us go in to mother!"

On the way he asked one or two questions about things up at the sœter, and got satisfactory answers.

"Now Hans sees us going in," thought Mildrid, as they passed a gap between the bars and some of the smaller outhouses.

When they got into the living-room, her father went to the door leading to the kitchen, opened it, and called:

"Come here, mother! Mildrid has come down."

"Why, Mildrid, has anything gone wrong?" was answered from the kitchen.

"No," replied Mildrid from behind her father, and then coming to the door herself, she went into the kitchen and stood beside her mother, who was sitting by the hearth paring potatoes and putting them in the pot.

Her mother now looked as inquiringly at her as her father had done, with the same effect. Then Randi set away the potato dish, went to the outer door and spoke to some one there, came back again, took off her kitchen apron and washed her hands, and they went together into the room.

Mildrid knew her parents, and knew that these preparations meant that they expected something unusual. She had had little courage before, but now it grew less. Her father took his raised seat close to the farthest away window, the one that looked down the valley. Her mother sat on the same bench, but nearer the kitchen. Mildrid seated herself on the opposite one, in front of the table. Hans could see her there; and he could see her father right in the face, but her mother he could hardly see.

Her mother asked, as her father had done before about things at the sœter; got the same information and a little more; for she asked more particularly. It was evident that both sides were making this subject last as long as possible, but it was soon exhausted. In the pause that came, both parents looked at Mildrid. She avoided the look, and asked what news there was of the neighbours. This subject was also drawn out as long as possible, but it came to an end too. The same silence, the same expectant eyes turned on the daughter. There was nothing left for her to ask about, and she began to rub her hand back and forwards on the bench.

"Have you been in at grandmother's?" asked her mother, who was beginning to get frightened.

No, she had not been there. This meant then that their daughter had something particular to say to *them*, and it could not with any seemliness be put off longer.

"There is something that I must tell you," she got out at last, with changing colour and downcast eyes.

Her father and mother exchanged troubled looks. Mildrid raised her head and looked at them with great imploring eyes.

"What is it, my child?" asked her mother anxiously.

"I am betrothed," said Mildrid; hung her head again, and burst into tears.

No more stunning blow could have fallen on the quiet circle. The parents sat looking at each other, pale and silent. The steady, gentle Mildrid, for whose careful ways and whose obedience they had so often thanked God, had, without asking their advice, without their knowledge, taken life's most important step, a step that was also decisive for *their* past and future. Mildrid felt each thought along with them, and fear stopped her crying.

Her father asked gently and slowly: "To whom, my child?"

After a silence came the whispered answer: "To Hans Haugen."

No name or event connected with Haugen had been mentioned in that room for more than twenty years. In her parents' opinion nothing but evil had come to Tingvold from there. Mildrid again knew their thoughts: she sat motionless, awaiting her sentence.

Her father spoke again mildly and slowly: "We don't know the man, neither I nor your mother — and we didn't know that you knew him."

"And I didn't know him either," said Mildrid.

The astonished parents looked at each other. "How did it happen then?" It was her mother who asked this.

"That is what I don't know myself," said Mildrid.

"But, my child, surely you're mistress of your own actions?"

Mildrid did not answer.

"We thought," added her father gently, "that we could be quite sure of *you*."

Mildrid did not answer.

"But how did it happen?" repeated her mother more impatiently; you must know that!"

"No, I don't know it — I only know that I could not help it — no, I couldn't!" She was sitting holding on to the bench with both hands.

"God forgive and help you! Whatever came over you?"

Mildrid gave no answer.

Her father calmed their rising excitement by saying in a gentle, friendly voice: "Why did you not speak to one of us my child?"

And her mother controlled herself, and said quietly: "You know how much we think of our children, we who have lived such a lonely life; and — yes, we may say it, especially of you, Mildrid; for you have been so much to us."

Mildrid felt as if she did not know where she was.

"Yes, we did not think you would desert us like this."

It was her father who spoke last. Though the words came gently, they did not hurt the less.

"I will not desert you!" she stammered.

"You must not say that," he answered, more gravely than before, "for you have done it already."

Mildrid felt that this was true, and at the same time that it was not true, but she could not put her feeling into words.

Her mother went on: "Of what good has it all been, the love that we have shown our children, and the fear of God that we have taught them? In the first temptation ——" for her daughter's sake she could say no more.

But Mildrid could bear it no longer. She threw her arms over the table, laid her head on them, her face towards her father, and sobbed.

Neither father nor mother was capable of adding by another reproachful word to the remorse she seemed to feel. So there was silence.

It might have lasted long — but Hans Haugen saw from where he sat that she was in need of help. His hunter's eye had caught every look, seen the movement of their lips, seen her silent struggle; now he saw her throw herself on the table, and he jumped up, and soon his light foot was heard in the passage. He knocked; they all looked up, but no one said, "Come in!" Mildrid half rose, blushing through her tears; the door opened, and Hans with his gun and dog stood there, pale but quite composed. He turned and shut the door, while the dog, wagging his tail, went up to Mildrid. Hans had been too preoccupied to notice that it had followed him in.

"Good morning!" said he. Mildrid fell back on her seat, drew a long breath, and looked at him with relief in her eyes; her fear, her bad conscience — all gone! *She was right, yes; she was right* — let come now whatever it pleased God to send!

No one had answered Hans's greeting, nor had he been asked to come forward.

"I am Hans Haugen," he said quietly; lowered his gun and stood holding it. After the parents had exchanged looks once or twice, he went on, but with a struggle: "I came down with Mildrid, for if she has done wrong, it was my fault."

Something had to be said. The mother looked at the father, and at last he said that all this had happened without their knowing anything of it, and that Mildrid could give them no explanation of how it had come about. Hans answered that neither could he. "I am not a boy," he said, "for I am twenty-eight; but yet it came this way, that I, who never cared for any one before, could think of nothing else in the world from the time I saw her. If she had said No — well, I can't tell — but I shouldn't have been good for much after that."

The quiet, straightforward way he said this made a good impression. Mildrid trembled; for she felt that this gave things a different look. Hans had his cap on, for in their district it was not the custom for a passer-by to take off his hat when he came in; but now he took it off unconsciously, hung it on the barrel of his gun, and crossed his hands over it. There was something about his whole appearance and behaviour that claimed consideration.

"Mildrid is so young," said her mother; "none of us had thought of anything like this beginning with her already."

"That is true enough, but to make up I am so much older," he answered; and the housekeeping at home, in my house, is no great affair; it will not task her too hard — and I have plenty of help."

The parents looked at each other, at Mildrid, at him. "Do you mean her to go home with you?" the father asked incredulously, almost ironically.

"Yes," said Hans; "it is not the farm that I am coming after." He reddened, and so did Mildrid.

If the farm had sunk into the ground the parents could not have been more astonished than they were at hearing it thus despised, and Mildrid's silence showed that she agreed with Hans. There was something in this resolution of the young people, unintentional on their part that, as it were, took away from the parents the right of decision; they felt themselves humbled.

"And it was you who said that you would not forsake us," said her mother in quiet reproach, that went to Mildrid's heart. But Hans came to her assistance:

"Every child that marries has to leave its parents."

He smiled, and added in a friendly way: "But it's not a long journey to Haugen from here — just a little over four miles."

Words are idle things at a time like this; thoughts take their own way

in spite of them. The parents felt themselves deserted, almost deceived by the young ones. They knew that there was no fault to be found with the way of living at Haugen; the tourists had given the place a good name; from time to time it had been noticed in the newspapers; but Haugen was Haugen, and that their dearest child should wish to carry their race back to Haugen was more than they could bear! In such circumstances most people would likely have been angry, but what these two desired was to get quietly away from what pained them. They exchanged a look of understanding, and the father said mildly:

"This is too much for us all at once; we can't well give our answer yet."

"No," continued the mother; "we were not expecting such great news — nor to get it like this."

Hans stood quiet for a minute before he said:

"It is true enough that Mildrid should first have asked her parents' leave. But remember that neither of us knew what was happening till it was too late. For that is really the truth. Then we could do no more than come at once, both of us, and that we have done. You must not be too hard on us."

This left really nothing more to be said about their behaviour, and Hans's quiet manner made his words sound all the more trustworthy. Altogether Endrid felt that he was not holding his own against him, and the little confidence he had in himself made him the more desirous to get away.

"We do not know you," he said, and looked at his wife. "We must be allowed to think it over."

"Yes, that will certainly be best," went on Randi; "we ought to know something about the man we are to give our child to."

Mildrid felt the offence there was in these words, but looked imploringly at Hans.

"That is true," answered Hans, beginning to turn his gun under the one hand; "although I don't believe there are many men in the district much better known than I am. But perhaps someone has spoken ill of me?" He looked up to them.

Mildrid sat there feeling ashamed on her parents' account, and they themselves felt that they had perhaps awakened a false suspicion, and this they had no desire to do. So both said at once:

"No, we have heard nothing bad of you."

And the mother hastened to add that it was really the case that they hardly knew anything about him, for they had so seldom asked about the Haugen people. She meant no harm at all by saying this, and not till the words had passed her lips did she notice that she had expressed herself unfortunately, and she could see that both her husband and Mildrid felt the same. It was a little time before the answer came:

"If the family of Tingvold have never asked after the Haugen people, the fault is not ours; we have been poor people till these last years."

In these few words lay a reproach that was felt by all three to be deserved, and that thoroughly. But never till now had it occurred to either husband or wife that they had been in this case neglecting a duty; never till now had they reflected that their poor relations at Haugen should not have been made to suffer for misfortunes of which they had been in no way the cause. They stole an awkward glance at each other, and sat still, feeling real shame. Hans had spoken quietly, though Randi's words must have been very irritating to him. This made both the old people feel that he was a fine fellow, and that they had two wrongs to make good again. Thus it came about that Endrid said:

"Let us take time and think things over; can't you stay here and have dinner with us? Then we can talk a little."

And Randi added: "Come away here and sit down."

Both of them rose.

Hans set away the gun with his cap on it, and went forward to the bench on which Mildrid was sitting, whereupon she at once got up, she did not know why. Her mother said she had things to see to in the kitchen, and went out. Her father was preparing to go too; but Mildrid did not wish to be alone with Hans as long as her parents withheld their consent, so she went towards the other door, and they presently saw her crossing the yard to her grandmother's house. As Endrid could not leave Hans alone, he turned and sat down again.

The two men talked together about indifferent matters — first it was about the hunting, about the Haugen brothers' arrangements in the little summer huts they had high up on the mountains, about the profits they made by this sort of thing, &c., &c. From this they came to Haugen itself, and the tourists, and the farm management; and from all he heard Endrid got the impression of there being prosperity there now, and plenty of life. Randi came backwards and forwards, making preparations for the dinner, and often listened to what was being said; and it was easy to see that the two old people, at first so shy of Hans, became by degrees a little surer of him; for the questions began to be more personal.

They did not fail to observe his good manners at the dinner-table He sat with his back to the wall, opposite Mildrid and her mother; the father sat at the end of the table on his high seat. The farm people had dined earlier, in the kitchen, where indeed all in the house generally took their meals together. They were making the difference to-day because they were unwilling that Hans should be seen. Mildrid felt at table that her mother looked at her whenever Hans smiled. He had one of those serious faces that grow very pleasant when they smile. One or two such things Mildrid added together in her mind, and brought them to the sum she wanted to arrive at. Only she did not feel herself so sure, but that the strain in the room was too great for her, and she was glad enough to escape from it by going after dinner again to her grandmother's.

The men took a walk about the farm, but they neither went where the people were working, nor where grandmother could see them. Afterwards they came and sat in the room again, and now mother had finished her work and could sit with them. By degrees the conversation naturally became more confidential, and in course of time (but this was not till towards evening) Randi ventured to ask Hans how it had all come about between him and Mildrid; Mildrid herself had been able to give no account of it. Possibly it was principally out of feminine curiosity that the mother asked, but the question was a very welcome one to Hans.

He described everything minutely, and with such evident happiness, that the old people were almost at once carried away by his story. And when he came to yesterday — to the forced march Beret had made in search of him because Mildrid was plunged in anguish of mind on her parents' account — and then came to Mildrid herself, and told of her ever-increasing remorse became her parents knew nothing; told of her flight down to them, and how, worn-out in soul and body, she had had to sit down and rest and had fallen asleep, alone and unhappy — then the old people felt that they recognised their child again. And the mother especially began to feel that she had perhaps been too hard with her.

While the young man was telling about Mildrid, he was telling too, without being aware of it, about himself; for his love to Mildrid showed clearly in every word, and made her parents glad. He felt this himself at last, and was glad too — and the old couple unaccustomed to such quiet self-reliance and strength, felt real happiness. This went on increasing, till the mother at last, without thinking, said smilingly:

"I suppose you've arranged everything right up to the wedding, you two — before asking either of us?"

The father laughed too, and Hans answered, just as it occurred to him at the moment, by softly singing a single line of the Wedding March,

"Play away! speed us on! we're in haste, I and you!"

and laughed; but was modest enough at once to turn to something else. He happened accidentally to look at Randi, and saw that she was quite pale. He felt in an instant that he had made a mistake in recalling that tune to her. Endrid looked apprehensively at his wife, whose emotion grew till it became so strong that she could not stay in the room; she got up and went out.

"I know I have done something wrong," said Hans anxiously.

Endrid made no reply. Hans, feeling very unhappy, got up to go after Randi and excuse himself, but sat down again, declaring that he had meant no harm at all.

"No, you could hardly be expected to understand rightly about that," said Endrid.

"Can't *you* go after her and put it right again?"

He had already such confidence in this man that he dared ask him anything.

But Endrid said: "No; rather leave her alone just now; I know her."

Hans, who a few minutes before had felt himself at the very goal of his desires, now felt himself cast into the depths of despair, and would not be cheered up, though Endrid strove patiently to do it. The dog helped by coming forward to them; for Endrid went on asking questions about him, and afterwards told with real pleasure about a dog he himself had had, and had taken much interest in, as is generally the way with people leading a lonely life.

Randi had gone out and sat down on the doorstep. The thought of her daughter's marriage and the sound of the Bridal March together had stirred up old memories too painfully. *She* had not, like her daughter, given herself willingly to a man she loved! The shame of her wedding-day had been deserved; and that shame, and the trouble, and the loss of their children — all the suffering and struggle of years came over her again.

And so all her Bible-reading and all her praying had been of no avail! She sat there in the most violent agitation! Her grief that she could thus be overcome caused her in despair to begin the bitterest self-accusation. Again she felt the scorn of the crowd at her foolish bridal procession; again she loathed herself for her own weakness — that she could not stop her crying then, nor her thinking of it now — that with her want of self-control she had cast undeserved suspicion on her parents, destroyed her own health and through this caused the death of the children she bore, and lastly that with all this she had embittered the life of a loving husband, and feigned a piety that was not real, as her present behaviour clearly showed!

How dreadful that she still felt it in this way — that she had got no farther!

Then it burst upon her — both her crying in church and the consuming bitterness that had spoiled the early years of her married life had been *wounded vanity*. It was wounded vanity that was weeping now; and that might at any moment separate her from God, her happiness in this world and the world to come!

So worthless, so worthless did she feel herself that she dared not look up to God; for oh! how great were her shortcomings towards Him! But why, she began to wonder, why had she succumbed just now — at the moment when her daughter, in all true-heartedness and overflowing happiness, had given herself to the man she loved? Why at this moment arouse all the ugly memories and thoughts that lay dormant in her mind? Was she envious of Mildrid; envious of her own daughter? No, *that* she knew she was not — and she began to recover herself.

What a grand thought it was that her daughter was perhaps going to atone for *her* fault! Could children do that? Yes, as surely as they them-

selves were a work of ours, they could — but we must help too, with repentance, with gratitude! And before Randi knew what was happening, she could pray again, bowing in deep humility and contrition before the Lord, who had once more shown her what she was without Him. She prayed for grace as one that prays for life; for she felt that it was life that was coming to her again! Now her account was blotted out, it was just the last settling of it that had unnerved her.

She rose and looked up through streaming tears; she knew that things had come right now; there was One who had lifted the burden of pain from her!

Had she not had the same feeling often before? No, never a feeling like this — not till now was the victory won. And she went forward knowing that she had gained the mastery over herself. Something was broken that till now had bound her — she felt with every movement that she was free both in soul and body. And if, after God, she had her daughter to thank for this, that daughter should in return be helped to enjoy her own happiness to the full.

By this time she was in the passage of grandmother's house; but no one in the house recognised her step. She took hold of the latch and opened the door like a different person. "Mildrid, come here!" she said; and Mildrid and her grandmother looked at each other, for that was not mother. Mildrid ran to her. What could be happening? Her mother took her by the arm, shut the door behind her, so that they were alone, then threw her arms round her neck, and wept and wept, embracing her with a vehemence and happiness which Mildrid, uplifted by her love, could return right heartily.

"God for ever bless and recompense you!" whispered the mother.

The two sitting in the other house saw them coming across the yard, hand in hand, walking so fast that they felt sure something had happened. The door opened and both came forward. But instead of giving her to Hans, or saying anything to him or Endrid, the mother just put her arms once more round her daughter, and repeated with a fresh burst of emotion: "God for ever bless and reward you!"

Soon they were all sitting in grandmother's room. The old woman was very happy. She knew quite well who Hans Haugen was — the young people had often spoken about him; and she at once understood that this union wiped out, as it were, much that was painful in the life of her son and his wife. Besides, Hans's good looks rejoiced the cheery old woman's heart. They all stayed with her, and the day ended with father, after a psalm, reading from a prayer-book a portion beginning: "The Lord has been in our house!"

I shall only tell of two days in their life after this, and in each of these days only of a few minutes.

The first is the young people's wedding-day. Inga, Mildrid's cousin, herself a married woman now, had come to deck out the bride. This was done in the store-house. The old chest which held the family's bridal silver ornaments — crown, girdle, stomacher, brooches, rings — was drawn from its place. Grandmother had the key of it, and came to open it, Beret acting as her assistant. Mildrid had put on her wedding-dress and all the ornaments that belonged to herself, before this grandeur (well polished by Beret and grandmother the week before) came to light, glittering and heavy. One after another each ornament was tried. Beret held the mirror in front of the bride. Grandmother told how many of her family had worn these silver things on their wedding-day, the happiest of them all her own mother, Aslaug Haugen.

Presently they heard the Bridal March played outside; they all stopped, listened, and then hurried to the door to see what it meant. The first person they saw was Endrid, the bride's father. He had seen Hans Haugen with his brothers and sisters coming driving up the road to the farm. It was not often that any idea out of the common came to Endrid, but on this occasion it did occur to him that these guests ought to be received with the March of their race. He called out the fiddlers and started them; he was standing beside them himself, and some others had joined him, when Hans and his good brothers and sisters, in two carriages, drove into the yard. It was easily seen that this reception touched them.

An hour later the March of course struck up again. This was when the bride and bridegroom, and after them the bride's parents, came out, with the players going before them, to get into the carriages. At some great moments in our lives all the omens are propitious; to-day the bridal party drove away from Tingvold in glorious spring weather. The crowd at the church was so great that no one remembered having seen the like of it, on any occasion. And in this gathering each person knew the story of the family, and its connection with the Bridal March which was sounding exultantly in the sunshine over the heads of bride and bridegroom.

And because they were all thinking of the one thing, the pastor took a text for his address that allowed him to explain how our children are our life's crown, bearing clear witness to our honour, our development, our work.

On the way back from the altar Hans stopped just outside the church-door; he said something; the bride, in her superhuman happiness, did not hear it; but she felt what it was. He wished her to look at Ole Haugen's grave, how richly clad in flowers it lay to-day. She looked, and they passed out almost touching his headstone; the parents following them.

The other incident in their life that must be recalled is the visit of Endrid and Randi as grandparents. Hans has carried out his determination that they were to live at Haugen, although he had to promise that he would take Tingvold when the old people either could or would no longer

manage it, and when the old grandmother was dead. But in their whole visit there is only one single thing that concerns us here, and that is that Randi, after a kind reception and good entertainment, when she was sitting with her daughter's child on her knee, began rocking it and crooning something — and what she crooned was the Bridal March. Her daughter clasped her hands in wonder and delight, but controlled herself at once and kept silence; Hans offered Endrid more to drink, which he declined; but this was on both sides only an excuse for exchanging a look.

HERMAN BANG

(1857–)

HERMAN BANG was born on the Island of Als, Schleswig, in 1857, of an ancient and noble Danish family. He was forced to make his own living at the age of nineteen. He was for a number of years an actor. After leaving the stage he began writing. His first novel made an enormous success, and gave him money and plenty of leisure for travel. On returning to his native country, he made himself famous as a public lecturer and reader.

Bang's outstanding books are his novels and tales. Among his shorter works of fiction, *The Four Devils* is the best known.

The translation that follows was made especially for this volume, by Marie Ottilie Heyl. It has never before appeared in English.

THE FOUR DEVILS

THE director's bell rang. Gradually the people drifted into their seats, while the trampling in the balcony, the chatter in the orchestra, and the shouts of the boys who sold oranges almost drowned out the music; and, at last, even the blasé individuals in the boxes settled down in expectation.

The next number was, *Quatre Diables*, or *The Four Devils*. The net was stretched in readiness. Fritz and Adolf dashed out of their dressing room into the performers' lobby, and hurried along the passage, their gray cloaks flapping about their legs. They knocked at a door and called, "Aimée and Louise!"

Both sisters were waiting. They too were in a state of feverish excitement, wrapped in long white evening capes which enveloped them completely. Their maid, her felt hat stuck on askew, kept shrieking hoarsely, as she flew aimlessly around, carrying arm rouge and powdered resin.

"Come girls," called Adolf, "it's time." But for another moment they all ran aimlessly about, seized by the fever that attacks all trapeze artists, once they feel the tights on their legs.

The maid was making the most noise.

Aimée alone kept her composure, calmly extending her arms, from the depths of voluminous sleeves, towards Fritz. And quickly, without glancing at her face or speaking a word, he mechanically rubbed the powder puff up and down her outstretched arms, — as he always did.

"Come on," cried Adolf again.

They all ran out, hand in hand, and waited at the entrance, listening from without for the first strains of *The Love Waltz* to which they worked. It began:

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

Fritz and Adolf threw off their cloaks, and stood forth, radiant in suits of a pink so delicate that it seemed almost white. Their bodies actually appeared naked: every muscle showed.

The music ceased.

Meanwhile in the stable all was still and deserted except for a few attendants occupied in examining the feed bins. They allowed nothing to disturb them in their task of lifting, and suspiciously inspecting the heavy receptacles.

The melody began again, and The Four Devils entered the ring.

The applause sounded in their ears like a vague roar, and they could not distinguish a face. Every fibre of their bodies seemed aquiver with exertion.

Then Adolf and Fritz quickly unclasped the heavy cloaks for Louise and Aimée; the wraps slipped to the sand, and straightway hundreds of opera-glasses were focussed on the girls. They, too, appeared naked in their black tights, like two negresses with white faces.

The four swung themselves into the net and began to work. Nude they all seemed, as they flew to and fro between the swings, with their bars of shining brass. They embraced, caught one another, and encouraged each other with mutual cheers. It seemed as if the black and white bodies were passionately entwined, only to fall apart once more in their seductive nudeness.

And the *Love Waltz* with its sleepily languishing rhythm went on and on; the women's hair, when they flew, fluttered about their black bodies, enveloping them like shining satin cloaks.

They went on and on, working above each other. Adolf and Louise were above the others. The applause reached them in a confused murmur, while the performers in their boxes, among them the still excited maid with her rose-wreathed hat more crazily askew than before, kept their glasses glued on the Devils. These four were known throughout the circus world for their daring.

"Oui, oui, their hips are quite free."

"The trick, you see, is to have the thighs exposed." These exclamations came from the artists' box.

The stout première equestrienne of "The Knights of the Sixteenth Century," Mademoiselle Rosa, laid her glasses heavily to one side. "No

they are not wearing a sign of a corset," she sighed, sweating at every pore, under her own heavy armor.

They continued to work. The electric lights alternated from blue to yellow, as the bodies flew through the air.

Fritz gave a cry as, hanging by his feet, he caught Aimée in his arms. Then they rested, sitting side by side on the trapeze.

They heard Louise and Adolf calling to each other up above; Aimée, with laboring breath, commented on Louise's work:

"Voyez donc, voyez," she cried, as Adolf caught Louise on his legs.

But Fritz made no reply. As he wiped his hands on the little square of cloth that he kept for that purpose, his eyes were glued on the tier of boxes that glowed and swayed far below them like the border of a many-colored flower-bed.

Suddenly Aimée, too, grew silent, and stared in the same direction, until, with an obvious effort at detachment, he remarked:

"It's our turn now," and she recalled herself with a jerk.

Again they dried their hands on the cambric, and threw themselves forward, hanging by their arms, as if to try the strength of their biceps. Then back into place again. With their souls in their eyes, they measured the distance between the trapezes. Suddenly both cried:

"Du courage!"

And Fritz flew backwards to the farthest trapeze, while Louise and Adolf emitted a long sustained cry, like one who encourages an animal.

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

Their big act began. They took off backwards, flew past each other with hoarse cries, and reached the distant goal. With another shout, they repeated this. Then, as Louise and Adolf revolved on their swings like wheels endowed with perpetual motion, there fell from the very top of the rotunda, a rain of glittering dust, that sifted slowly downward, glowing in the pure white flood of the calcium lights. For a moment, the Devils seemed to fly through a shimmering cloud of gold, while the settling dust bespangled their nudity with thousands of golden specks.

Suddenly, one after the other, they shot head-first through the glittering mist into the net — and the music stopped.

In sudden confusion, they leaned on each other as if they had become dizzy. Only after they had answered a number of curtain calls, did the applause begin to subside.

Moaning, they ran into their dressing rooms; Adolf and Fritz threw themselves flat on a mattress that lay on the floor, and rolled themselves up in blankets. There they rested a while, almost unconscious. At last

they got up and changed their clothes. Adolf looked sharply from his own reflection to Fritz, who was putting on a groom's coat.

"Going on duty?" he inquired.

Fritz answered crossly: "The manager asked me to."

He joined the others who were keeping watch at the stables, and like him, were resting their exhausted bodies against the wall. . . .

After the performance, the troupe gathered in the restaurant. The Devils sat, mute like the others, at a private table. A few of the guests were playing cards, but quite silently. Not a sound, but the clink of the coins as they were pushed across the table. Two waiters stood in front of the buffet, and stared dully at all these silent people, sitting stupidly along the wall, with outstretched legs, and nerveless, dangling arms. The waiters began to turn down the gas.

Adolf laid some money beside one of the beer glasses and got up. "Come on," he said, " let's go." The other three followed.

The streets were quiet; not a sound but their own footsteps, as they walked along two by two, just as they worked. Having reached their boarding place, they parted in the dark entry of the first floor with a soft "good night."

Aimée waited on the dark landing, until Fritz and Adolf had reached the second floor, and closed the door behind them. Then she joined her sister, and the two girls undressed without saying a word. But, once in bed, Louise began to chat about the work of the others, about the people in the boxes, and the regular habitués, for she knew all their faces. Aimée continued to sit, half undressed on the edge of the bed, without moving, while Louise's chatter became more and more fragmentary, until she finally fell asleep. A little later, she awoke, and sat up with a start. Aimée was still sitting beside her, in the same position.

"Aren't you *ever* coming to bed?" asked Louise.

Aimeé quickly turned out the light. "Right away," she said, and got up. But even in bed she could not sleep. One thing kept going through her mind: that Fritz's eyes never met hers any more, when he powdered her arms.

Fritz and Adolf were also in bed, but Fritz tossed about like a man on the rack: Was that meant for him? And what did she want of him, that woman in the box? Did she want anything? Why, then, must she stare at him so persistently? Why brush by him so closely? What did it all mean?

He thought of nothing but this woman. From morning till night, of nothing but her, just her. He felt like an animal in a cage; always the same question kept revolving in his head: what of this woman in the box? He sensed the fragrance of her clothing, as he did whenever she came down and brushed by him, as he stood waiting in his groom's livery.

But was all this really meant for him? What did she want? He con-

tinued to toss painfully to and fro, repeating into the darkness, as if it fascinated him, the phrase, *femme du monde!* And the same questions surged over him anew. Was it meant for him? Was it meant for him?

Aimée had got up again. Silently, she crept across the room. In the dark, her fingers groped for the rosary in the bureau drawer; they touched it.

The house was still, so still . . .

The Devils had been working. In the dressing-room, Adolf was scolding because Fritz, so he insisted, had ruined their contract through his everlasting services as groom, for the Devils were exempted from this.

But Fritz had not a word to reply. Every evening, he donned the livery, and taking his post beside the box entrance, waited for the "Lady of the Box" to come out, leaning on her husband's arm. She often sat during the whole of the last act in the stable; and Fritz always followed her. She spoke to the attendants, patted the horses, or read aloud the names affixed to the stalls. Fritz followed her, but to him she never addressed a word.

It was all for his benefit — ah, he knew it well; through a thousand little gestures — the straightening of her back, the movement of her arm, the glance of her eye, she showed that they were destined for one another. They seemed actually to touch, though each took care to keep the distance that separated them. In spite of it, they felt close to each other; it was as if some indescribable impulse had caught them in a double coil that held them both bound. She changed her place, to read the inscription on a new stall. Fritz followed. She laughed, walked on, but returned to pat the dogs. Fritz followed, followed, wherever she led.

He pretended not to see her. But his eyes rested on the hem of her dress and on her extended hand with the look of a wild beast that is being broken, a look full of lowering hate, because the creature feels his impotence.

One evening she approached him; her husband had walked on a little. He started at her softly breathed question: "Are you afraid of me?"

He hesitated a moment. "I don't know," he answered. His voice was hoarse and harsh. She could not reply. Seized by a sudden fear that sobered her, she realized all that those burning looks conveyed. She turned, and with a short laugh that offended her own ears, walked rapidly away.

On the next evening, Fritz did not go to the stalls. He had determined to avoid her, firmly resolved not to see her again. He felt that engulfing fear of women, which most circus performers have, as lurking foes ready to work their ruination, mysterious enemies who lie in wait, and are only born to work havoc with a man's strength. And if, carried on the tide of an irresistible impulse, he ever should surrender, this would be with a sort of desperate self-renunciation, a vengeful hatred of the woman, who was taking from him a part of his body, robbing him of his strength, his priceless stock-in-trade, his sole means of existence.

But this woman in the box was doubly dangerous, since she was a stranger, and not one of his own kind. What did she want of him? The very thought of her tortured his brain, which was not accustomed to thinking. He watched with apprehension every movement, feeling that she would do him some great, mysterious wrong. Well he knew that there was no escape.

He would not see her again, positively not. It was easy to keep his vow, for she no longer came; not for two days, not for three. On the fourth, Fritz again donned his livery. But she did not appear, either on that evening or the following. All day long, he thought in fear, "If she should come," and in the evening came a dull anger, a brutal, inner rage, because she was not there.

So she had made a fool of him, lured him on, and then cast him off. So that was the kind of woman she was! But he would have revenge, he would find her. . . .

He visualized it all; how he would rain blows upon her, kick and maltreat her, until she writhed and lay half dead — she, that female! At night he lay for hours in silent wrath. And his desire took root during those first sleepless nights, took root in his despair, for he had never lain sleepless before.

Then at last, on the ninth day, she came. From the trapeze he caught sight of her face — he seemed to be looking through the eyes of another — and with a sudden jerk, in boyish exuberance, he launched his magnificent slender body, swinging by his taut arms, out into the air. His face was lighted by a brilliant smile, as he pulled himself up.

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

Lightly swaying his head in time to the waltz, he seized Aimée's hand gladly and joyfully, for the first time in a week, and called loudly to her, "Enfin, du courage!" It sounded like a shout of triumph. Yet afterwards, when he entered the stalls in his uniform, and found *her* there, he was again stricken dumb; he felt hostile and fixed upon her the same look of hatred that had not dared to meet her eyes before. But in the restaurant, after the performance, he suddenly grew animated, almost reckless. He laughed loudly, and performed all sorts of tricks. He juggled cups and steins, and even balanced his high silk hat on the tip of his cane. The other artists were captivated by his high spirits. The clown, Tom, fetched his accordion and played lustily, stalking over the chairs with his long legs.

Monstrous excitement ensued. Everybody did tricks. Mr. Fillis balanced a huge paper bag on his nose, and two or three clowns cackled, as if they

were in a chicken yard. Fritz screamed loudest of all. Having jumped upon a table, he juggled two glass globes that he had unscrewed from the chandelier, and called, with beaming countenance, above all the din, "Adolf, tiens!"

Adolf, standing on the next table, caught the globe deftly.

The performers were everywhere, now on the chairs, now on the tables. The clowns cackled; the accordion wailed.

"Fritz, tiens!"

The globes flew back and forth again, over the heads of the clowns. Fritz caught them, and spun quickly around:

"Aimée, tiens!"

He threw them straight at Aimée, and though she jumped up quickly, it was too late; the globe crashed to the floor. Fritz burst out laughing, as he looked down on the broken glass from the table on which he stood.

"That's good luck," he said, and laughed; then stopped suddenly, his eyes riveted on the gas fixture.

Aimée had turned away. She had grown pale, as she took her place against the wall. The racket continued, though it was almost midnight. The waiters turned down the gas, but the performers did not cease; in fact, they redoubled the noise in the dim half light. From all sides, arose an ear-splitting cackling and shrieking. Fritz was walking on his hands across the table under the chandelier.

He was the last to leave. He was as excited as though he were drunk.

They walked along in little groups, they gradually separated. Their farewells sounded strange in the darkness. "Night," called Mr. Fillis, — nasal as ever.

"Good night, good night." . . .

At last, all was quiet, and the Four Devils sauntered along in their accustomed silence. They no longer cared to talk, though Fritz could not settle down; he spun his good hat on the end of his cane.

Finally they reached their lodgings, and bade each other good night.

As soon as he reached the bedroom, Fritz opened both windows wide and began to whistle loudly, so that the sound carried far out into the street.

"Are you crazy?" asked Adolf. "What the devil ails you, anyway?"

Fritz merely laughed: "Il fait si beau temps," was all he answered, and again resumed his whistling.

Downstairs, Aimée also had opened a window. Louise, on the point of undressing, asked her to close it, but the other remained motionless, staring into the dark street.

Until now she had not understood why his eyes stared so vacantly when he looked at her; why he sounded so bored when he spoke to her; and why he seemed half deaf when she said anything to him. They were no longer the same beings: yesterday he had even refused to powder her arms. He

had dashed in, rushed and impatient as ever, but when she stretched out her arms, he had merely stared vacantly at them, and, then, collecting his thoughts, gruffly burst out:

"Oh, powder them yourself!" and walked away.

Without understanding, she had slowly powdered first the left arm, then the right.

Never had she realized that anyone could suffer so.

Aimée rested her head against the window frame, sudden, scalding tears rolling down her cheeks. Now she knew everything; now she understood.

Suddenly she raised her head: Fritz was beginning to hum loudly to himself. It was the *Love Waltz.* Louder and louder grew his humming; finally he began to sing.

How carefree it sounded, how happy! Every note was a stab, and still she listened: the song seemed to recall her entire life, everything!

How well she remembered it all, from the very first day she had seen him!

Louise called to her again, and she closed the window mechanically. But she did not go to bed. She sat down in a dark corner.

Ah yes, how well she remembered it all.

How clearly Aimée could visualize Fritz and Adolf, the first time they appeared, when they were to be "adopted" by Father Cecchi.

It was early, Louise and Aimée were still in bed.

The boys had stood in the corner, hanging their heads; they wore linen trousers, though it was midwinter, and Fritz had a straw hat.

Father Cecchi made them strip, and examined them carefully, pinching their legs and tapping their chests until they wept, while the old woman who had brought them, stood stiffly by, a shrivelled figure, mumbling to herself. Nothing about her moved, except the black flowers on her hat; these seemed to tremble a bit. She never asked a question, merely kept her eyes fixed on the boys, as they obeyed Cecchi's commands.

Aimée and Louise watched from the bed. Father Cecchi continued to probe and tap.

Finally they were "adopted."

The old woman never said a word. She did not touch the boys, nor say "good-bye" to them. She appeared, all the while her black flowers were quivering, to have been seeking something that she could not find. So she walked out of the door, slowly and uncertainly, closing it behind her.

Fritz gave a long scream, as if he had been stabbed.

Then he and Adolf walked back into the corner and sat down, their chins on their knees, their fists firmly braced against the floor, mute as statues.

Father Cecchi chased them into the kitchen to peel potatoes, sending Aimée and Louise after them. All four sat silently around the bowl.

"Where do you come from?" Louise asked. The boys did not answer. With tightly closed lips, they stared at the floor.

After a while, Aimée whispered: "Was that your mother?"

Still they did not answer, but sat with heaving breasts, sobbing to themselves. All that one heard, was the splash of the potatoes as they dropped into the water.

"Is she dead?" Louise whispered in her turn. The boys still made no answer, and the little girls kept looking from one to the other, until they began to cry softly, first Aimeé and then Louise.

The next day, the boys began to "work." They learned the Chinese Dance and the Peasants' Dance. Three weeks later the four of them "appeared" in public.

Whenever they were to dance, they stood in the wings, Aimée with Fritz, Louise with Adolf. Their eyes were fixed in a glassy stare; their tongues tried to moisten their lips, which were parched with fear, as they listened to the music of the orchestra.

"Pull your coat down," said Aimée, scarcely able to control her own feverish excitement, as she straightened Fritz's jacket, which had slipped.

"Commencez!" cried Cecchi from the first wings. The curtain went up; it was time to go on. They did not see the footlights; they did not see the people. With a terrified smile, they performed the steps in which they had been drilled, moving their lips as they counted the beats, their eyes riveted on Cecchi, who was beating time with his foot.

"To the left," Aimée whispered to Fritz, who was never quite sure of himself. She broke out in a cold perspiration — it was such an effort to remember for both of them.

The four children looked like little wax figures turning on a music box.

The audience applauded and gave them a curtain call. Oranges were thrown on to the stage. The children picked up the fruit, smiling gratefully, though they knew it must be handed over to father Cecchi, who ate the oranges, when he drank brandy and water in the evenings, and played cards with the agent, Watson.

Sometimes the two played all night in Cecchi's lodgings. Whenever they quarrelled, the children would awaken, looking at them wide-eyed, until they fell back into the deep slumber of exhaustion.

Time passed.

Cecchi's troupe joined a circus, and all four of them went through the mill. Rehearsals began at eight-thirty. With chattering teeth, they dressed, and began work in the dusk of the tent. Louise and Aimée walked the tight-rope, balancing with two flags, and father Cecchi, leaning against the railing, gave directions.

Then the horse was brought in, and Fritz was to execute the jockey-leap. Father Cecchi, with a long whip, shouted the commands. Fritz leaped and leaped — but in vain. He fell at the gate, and as he leaned

dizzily against the horse, the whip whistled through the air, raising long welts on the boy's legs.

Father Cecchi continued his commands. Fighting down his sobs, Fritz leaped again, and again. But he always missed and fell.

Old wounds on his body opened and bled so that his tights were spotted with blood.

And Father Cecchi kept crying, "Encore, encore!" Breathless, sobbing, the boy leaped, his face contorted with pain. The whip struck him, and in despair he screamed, "I can't!" But he had to try again.

The horse was beaten more than ever, and flew on with the sobbing child, whose limbs quivered with pain. "I can't, oh, I can't."

All the performers watched mutely from the boxes.

"Encore!" cried Cecchi. Fritz leaped again. Pale, with white lips, Aimée sat hidden, watching with horror and indignation. But Cecchi would not stop. It lasted over an hour, — an hour and a quarter. Fritz's body was one bleeding wound. He fell, and fell again, stamping his feet on the sand with anguish.

No, it could not be done. He was finally dismissed with a curse.

Aimée ran from the box; moaning with sympathy, she hid Fritz behind some barrel-staves. Breathless, with clenched hands, he sputtered curses — vulgar street words, phrases of the stable.

Aimée sat quite still Only her white lips quivered.

For a long time they lay hidden back of that pile of staves. Fritz's head had dropped against the wall; he had fallen into the sleep of painful exhaustion, while Aimée, pale as a little spectre, sat watching over his sleep.

Years passed by. The four had at last grown up.

Father Cecchi was dead. He had been kicked to death by a horse.

But the four stuck together, through all the ups and downs that they encountered, sometimes working with large shows, sometimes with small.

How clearly Aimée could visualize the bare, whitewashed structure in that provincial town where they had worked one winter! How cold it was! Three braziers were brought in before the performance, filling the whole building with smoke, so that breathing became difficult. Out in the stalls stood the "artists," blue with the cold, holding their bare arms over a brazier, while the clowns leaped about the icy floor, in their cloth shoes, just to keep their feet warm.

The Cecchi troupe worked at various things. They danced, Fritz as Aimée's partner. Aimée was also première equestrienne, and Fritz, dressed as groom, tightened her saddle girth. The troupe worked hard, filling out a good half of the program.

But the show was a failure none the less. Every week another horse disappeared from the stalls, sold to buy fodder for the others. The perform-

ers who had money went away; those who were forced to remain went hungry, until the inevitable happened, and they were forced to close.

Horses, costumes, everything was taken from them. Representatives of the law had stepped in, and made a clean sweep.

The few performers who remained sat silent and disconsolate in the dark room. They couldn't leave. They did not even know where to go.

In the stable, on a feed box, the director sat in front of the empty stalls and wept, continuously mumbling a string of curses in any language that happened to occur to him.

Otherwise not a sound: the place was dead. Only the dogs, overlooked by the authorities, lay sadly on a pile of straw, with anxious, troubled eyes.

The Cecchi troupe entered the deserted restaurant. The proprietor had locked the buffet, and taken away the glasses. Tables and chairs, thick with dust, stood about in disorder.

The four sat down gloomily in a corner. They had just returned from their daily walk to the post-office. There were letters from various agents, but they contained only refusals.

Fritz opened and read them. The other three sat near, not daring to put a question. He opened one letter after another, slowly, apprehensively, read it, and laid it aside. The others watched in troubled silence.

Then he said: "Nothing."

And once more they sat in front of those fateful letters that brought nothing.

Finally Fritz burst out: "We cannot go on this way. We must try for a specialty." Adolf shrugged his shoulders. "Every line is overcrowded already," he said, adding sarcastically, "Invent something new, why don't you?".

"Trapeze work always means good pay," remarked Fritz in a suppressed voice.

The others made no reply, and Fritz said as before: "We could work in the cupolas."

Silence again. Then Adolf cried, almost angrily, "Are you so perfectly sure of your limbs?" Fritz did not answer, and gloomy silence fell once more.

"We might separate, you know," suggested Adolf hoarsely.

The same idea had occurred to them all, but each tried to avoid suggesting it. Now it was out, and Adolf added, gazing into the gloom of the deserted place, "One cannot be everlastingly starving at the same thing!"

He spoke in a suppressed, excited voice, like one who is debating the impossible; but Fritz continued silent and motionless, staring at the floor.

They rose and filed out mutely, through those long halls. How cold and dark they were!

Softly, in an almost inaudible voice, Aimée said to Fritz, who was walking beside her, "Fritz, I will work in the air with you."

Fritz stopped: "I knew it," he said softly, and squeezed her hand.

Louise and Adolf said nothing.

They decided to remain in the city. Fritz pawned their rings, as a last resort, and Adolf continued to communicate with the agents.

But Fritz and Aimée worked. They had put up their trapeze in the "Pantheon" and began to work regularly, every day. They adapted some floor exercises to the trapeze and tortured their sweating, aching bodies for hours on end. From time to time Fritz's commands could be heard; then they were forced to rest, sitting side by side on the same bar with tired, exhausted smiles.

As they grew accustomed to the work, they began the Hanlon-Volta exercises, attempting leaps from one swing to another, only to fall into the outstretched net. But they persevered, encouraging each other with cries of "en avant! Ça va! Encore!"

Fritz at last was able to make his distance. Aimée fell. But they kept on. Their very souls looked from their eyes, their muscles responded like steel springs, their voices rang like subdued battle cries. At last they both succeeded. One followed the other with rapt, feverish interest: "En avant! Du courage!"

Aimée had got across; her muscles quivered as she hung from the farthest trapeze. She tried again, and succeeded. A great joy overwhelmed her. Both of them became intoxicated by the strength of their bodies. They flew past each other; rested again, dripping with perspiration, but smiling happily, hand in hand. Overcome by their joy, they praised each other's bodies, stroked the muscles that had served them so well, and looked at one another with shining eyes.

"Ça va, ça va," they shouted, and laughed aloud. Then they began to try more difficult feats; they thought up new combinations. Planning and calculating, with the zeal of inventors they plunged into their practice, made plans, and tried all sorts of experiments. Fritz scarcely slept: thoughts of his work kept him awake at night.

In the morning, before sunrise, he was knocking at Aimée's door, to awaken her. Standing outside, while waiting for her to dress, he would elaborate his plans, explaining in a loud voice, while she, with equal eagerness, called back replies, their happy voices filling the house.

Louise sat up in bed rubbing her eyes. She had begun to attend their rehearsals, and became quite carried away by the rapid progress made by Aimée and Fritz. She called to them and applauded. Then they would reply from above, and the hall rang with their happy voices.

Only Adolf sat mutely in a corner near the stable. One day, he too, strolled in to watch, but no one said a word to him.

Practice over, their strength gave out, and they fell heavily into the net below; Fritz leaped to the ground and carefully lifted Aimée down, holding her in his outstretched arms like a child.

They changed their clothes and went into a little tavern across the way for dinner. They began to speak of the future: where they might get engagements, what salary they could demand, what name they should assume. They knew that success awaited them now.

The two silent ones became loquacious. They laughed, as they built up their future, and Fritz kept inventing new tricks, always new ones.

"If only we dared," said Fritz, his voice hoarse with eagerness, "if we only dared!"

And Aimée replied, looking straight at him, "Why not? If you are willing."

Something in her voice touched Fritz: "You are brave," he said, suddenly, and looked into those trusting eyes, shining into his. Whereupon they sat, with heads against the wall, gazing into space, weaving daydreams.

One day, they tried that last leap, the trick they had decided would be their great feature. They succeeded. Flying backwards, they reached the trapeze.

From below, they heard a shout. It was Adolf. With upturned face, and beaming eyes, he was crying, "Bravo, bravo," so that the empty hall reechoed. "Bravo," he cried once more, overcome with admiration.

And they began to discuss it, all four of them, from above and below, explaining and questioning.

On this day, they ate together, and on the next as well. They all talked about the tricks, as though all of them were taking part. Fritz exclaimed: "Oui, mes enfants, if only the four of us worked together. You two above with rigid bars, and we two below, with our death leap. Oh, if we could only do that!"

He began to explain his plan to them, meticulously outlining all details, but Adolf said nothing, and Louise made no reply.

Next day, however, Adolf asked, standing with downcast eyes and shuffling feet, "Are you going to practice this afternoon?"

No, they never rehearsed in the afternoon. "You see," added Adolf, "we are wasting time, our muscles are getting stiff."

That afternoon Adolf and Louise began to practice. The other two came and watched, encouraging, and directing. Fritz sat there happily, playing with Aimée's hand.

"Ça va, ça va," they both shouted from below.

Up above, Louise and Adolf were flying boldly from swing to swing.

Now, they knew, they would stay together.

Rehearsals were over at last, and their act was ready. They worked as Fritz had wished, called themselves The Four Devils, and had costumes designed and made to order in Berlin.

They made their début in Breslau. Then they travelled from city to city, and always enjoyed immense success.

Aimée had undressed and gone to bed. Sleepless she lay, staring into the darkness. Yes, how vividly it all came back, from the very first day. They had spent their entire lives together, side by side.

And now *she* had come, this stranger; and at the thought the acrobat girl ground her teeth in sheer, desperate, physical rage — yes, *she* had come to destroy him!

What did she want of him, with her cat's eyes? What did she want with her provoking smile? What did she want, and why did she offer herself to him like a common drab? To ruin him utterly, to snatch him from her, to destroy his strength: annihilate him.

Aimée bit into her sheet, wadded up her pillow, but could find no rest for her feverish hands. Her mind could not summon up enough angry rebukes or coarse accusations; she wept again, overcome by all that paralyzing misery that pursued her night and day.

Fritz lay with closed eyes, his head resting on the lap of his beloved.

More and more slowly her pointed nails glided over his fair hair.

Fritz lay with closed eyes, his head resting lightly in her lap. So this was real: he, Fritz Schmidt, a Frankfort street urchin, a fatherless boy, whose mother, one day, more drunk than usual, had jumped into the river, and whose grandmother had sold him and his brother together for twenty marks. So this was real: he, Fritz Schmidt, called Cecchi, of The Four Devils, had become her lover — the lover of The Lady in the Box. It was his neck that rested on her knees; his arm that encircled her body, his throat to which her lips were pressed.

He half opened his eyes, and saw with the same uncomprehending, intoxicated admiration, her delicate hand, so soft, so untouched by work, her arched fingernails, her delicate white skin, that he loved to kiss so long and tenderly.

Yes, it was he, Fritz Cecchi, who sensed the fragrance of her body, so close to him, who felt the texture of her clothing, delicate as clouds. How his hands loved to fondle her!

For him alone, she waited each night beside the high grating, shivering, as if with the cold. She led him into the little garden of the palace, and clung to him behind every clump of bushes. His lips she called her "blossom," his arms, her "despair." How strangely she spoke. It was all so queer!

Fritz Cecchi smiled and closed his eyes again. She saw the smile, bent over him, and passed her lips across his face. Fritz continued to smile, enchanted by this miracle.

"How strange this is," he murmured softly, and continued in the same tone, "How strange this is," turning his head slightly from side to side.

"What?" she asked.

"This," he replied, and again lay still, as if afraid of waking from a

dream. But he continued to smile, mentally repeating her name, over and over, surprised at it, for it was one of the great names of Europe, and had reached even him — like a legend.

Slowly he reopened his eyes, and looked at her. Then, laughing like a boy, he seized her two ears, squeezing them harder and harder. Even this was permitted him — even this.

He half rose, resting his head on her shoulder, and with the same smile, gazed about the room. He was lord of all this, all that belonged to her, the thousand fragile curiosities that covered the queer spindle-legged furniture, which at first he had scarcely dared to touch. He, the juggler, had fingered these objects gingerly, as if they would fall to pieces in his hands; but now he could gayly play ball with an art table or balance an entire what-not, while she laughed and laughed.

The paintings were strange to him — pictures of ancestors in the costume of the Restoration Period, with dress swords and gauntlets. There were moments when he laughed loudly at these portraits, like a street gamin, because he, Fritz Schmidt, was sitting here with her, the scion of such ancestors, and that she was now his very own.

Finally she asked, "What are you laughing at?"

"Oh, yes," he replied, and suddenly stopped, "how strange this is, how strange this is . . . "

He experienced a peculiar, half-happy, half-timid astonishment that he should be here — actually the master here.

For so he felt himself. Was she not his? In his uncultured brain still dwelt the thought of male possessing female; he, the active one, who in his consuming passion was still the dominant force.

But all these primitive conceptions disappeared, although Fritz had always prided himself on subduing and taming them. He became powerless and helpless in his silent renewed admiration of her, whose most insignificant words had a different sound and inflection; whose body was of such strange exotic perfection, so undeveloped and so delicate.

He grew tractable and timid; and suddenly opened his eyes to make sure that it was no dream, stroking her dainty, slender fingers. Yes, it was all true!

Her hands passed more and more uncertainly through his hair, while he lay, as if asleep.

"But what do you want of me? " he asked.

"You stupid man," she whispered, and put her mouth close to his cheek, "You stupid man." She continued to whisper; the sound of her voice excited him even more than her embraces, "You stupid man, you stupid man!"

Then he sat up, and pressing her head against his breast, looked at her with indescribable tenderness. "Could you sleep here?" he asked, and rocked her in his arms like a child, until their eyes met, and both of them laughed.

"You stupid man."

His eyes kindled; he seized her; and swiftly, without a word, carried her in his outstretched arms into the room beyond. There a pale blue lamp glowed like a sleepy eye.

Day broke as they parted. But in all corners, on the treads of the stairs, in the garden around the quiet house that looked so aristocratic and so honorable, they drew out the hours of their rendezvous, while she still whispered like a refrain, "You stupid man!"

At last Fritz tore himself away, and the iron door closed after him. But, seeing her standing still, he returned and once more took her in his arms. Suddenly he laughed aloud as he stood beside her in front of that great palace. As if their thoughts had met, she also laughed as she looked up at the home of her fathers.

And he began, feeling a delightful sense of triumph under his curiosity, to ask questions about each of the great stone escutcheons over the windows and the inscriptions on the gate posts. She answered him, still laughing.

The proudest names in all the land were there. He did not know them, but she told something about each one. It was a tale of battles, honors, victories. He laughed.

Here were shields which had defended the throne, escutcheons as old as the throne of St. Peter.

He laughed.

Inflamed by her own unworthiness, she grew more passionate in her endearments, coarse, almost blasphemous in this dawning light, while she continued her narrative, as if she wished in the telling, to tear down the coats-of-arms, and trample them in the mire of her love.

"And that one?" he asked. "And that?"

She went on telling him all about them. It was a tale of centuries. Here thrones had been established, there kingdoms had fallen. This man had been the friend of an emperor; that caused the death of a king. She went on and on, whispering with a teasing sort of scorn, while she leaned against the shoulder of the acrobat, and gave herself up entirely to this sensation of defilement.

He, too, became intoxicated by it.

It seemed as if both of them beheld this annihilation, and were enjoying it — enjoying from minute to minute, the fall of this great House, with its portals, escutcheons, shields, memorial tablets, and turrets, the collapse of this great House that was being ground beneath the wheels of their passion.

Finally she tore herself away and ran up the path. At the little door, she turned once again, and as a last joke, threw a mocking kiss at the coat-of-arms on the pediment.

Fritz went home, feeling as if he had wings on his feet. At the same time, he was intensely aware of all her endearments.

All around him, the great city was coming to life. Carts rumbled along the streets, laden with all the treasures of the flower market: violets, early roses, cowslips, forsythia.

Fritz began to sing. Under his breath, he hummed the words of the *Love Waltz:*

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

The carts clattered past him — the entire street was alive with fragrance. The flower venders who sat on the drivers' seats wrapped in great blankets, turned round and smiled at him.

He never stopped singing, until he reached the street where he lived. It was silent and still half dark, the houses stood so close and high. Fritz now walked more slowly. Still humming, he scanned the house, from top to bottom, before entering.

He gave a sudden start. Had he seen a face peering through the glass of an upper window?

Pale, with bated breath, Aimée listened at the door. Yes, that was he:

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

He locked his door and all was still.

As pale as a sleep-walker, her hands pressed against her heart, Aimée crept into bed. Motionless she lay, staring out into the gray light of the dawn.

It was late when Fritz Cecchi awoke, and on account of his exhaustion, consciousness returned very gradually, as he lay watching Adolf rubbing himself down with a wet towel.

"Are you really awake?" asked Adolf, sarcastically.

"Yes," was all Fritz answered, as he continued to watch his brother.

"It's high time you got up," added Adolf in the same tone.

"Yes," said Fritz, but continued, without moving, to stare at the strong, undefiled body of his brother, observing the lively play of the muscles.

Suddenly a blind anger, the bitter, miserable wrath of the vanquished, overcame him. He raised his arms, and felt their weakness, braced his feet against the foot-board, and realized the softness of the leg muscles. Straightway he was overwhelmed by a wild primitive resentment against himself, his body, his sex; above all against *her*, the thief, the robber, the Delilah!

His fury was unreasoning. All he knew was that he longed to beat her to

death, like a madman, with clenched fists; beat her to pieces while she shrieked and laughed; until she couldn't move, and then trample on her with both feet.

Again he raised his arms, clasping his hands, and again felt the impotence of the weakened muscles, as he gritted his teeth with rage.

Adolf walked out, banging the door behind him.

Then Fritz leaped from the bed, and began to examine his body. He attempted a number of exercises and failed. He tried floor gymnastics with no greater success. His weary limbs shook stubbornly. Again he tried, striking himself, pinching his flesh with his fingernails. In vain. He could do nothing. He beat his head against the wall, and tried again, only to fail.

Exhausted, he sat down before the great mirror, and went over every muscle of his inert and unstrung body.

Then it was true: they robbed one of everything, health, strength, muscular power! It was true! He would soon lose everything: work, position, reputation. Yes, it was true.

He would go the same road as the others, soon it would be all over with him. It would be with him as it was with *The Stars*, who had dragged two women from city to city, and beat them, until they had to be shut up in an insane asylum.

He would end like the juggler, Charles, who had lived with the singer Adelina; *his* limbs had grown soft as a drunkard's, and finally he had hanged himself.

Or Hubert, who had eloped with an innkeeper's wife, and now rode at county fairs; or the juggler, Paul, who had fallen for Anita, the knife-thrower, and was now barker for a tent show.

Yes, they made a wreck of one's body.

But he would not surrender. Frantically, he began again to torture his muscles in an effort to harness his strength; to spur on every fibre of his body. This time he succeeded.

Wildly, he slapped on his clothes, and scarcely buttoning them, dashed out. He must practice, practice in the circus, on the trapeze.

Adolf, Aimée, and Louise were already at work; he saw them hanging from the bars in their gray work-smocks.

Fritz changed his clothes and began some ground-work. He walked on his hands, balancing first on the right, then on the left, until all his body quivered.

The others watched silently from their swings.

Then, suddenly and eagerly, he swung himself up into the net opposite Aimée. Hanging by his arms, he took long swings, stretching his slender body into a straight line, and began.

Aimée sat motionless. With her heavy, sleepless eyes she stared steadily at this being that she loved, this man whom she adored, who had just come from a love night with another woman.

Had they not lived side by side for years? Had their bodies not touched every day? She measured him with her eyes: his neck that had carried her, his arms that had caught her, his thighs that she had clasped. All the routine of their calling, all the knowledge of their work, increased her misery.

Mute, overwhelmed by frightful suffering — actual physical suffering, that only she could feel — she stared at Fritz as he worked opposite her.

But it was Fritz himself who aroused her at last.

"Why don't you begin?" he asked harshly.

"Oh, yes."

She gave a start and mechanically rose in the swing. For an instant their eyes met, and in that fleeting second, seeing her pale face, staring eyes, and rigid, motionless body, Fritz realized everything.

At the same moment he was seized by an unconquerable disgust at the thought of coming in contact with the body of a woman — a feeling of revolt against touching any other than her whom he loved. There welled up within him an insurmountable, chilling repugnance amounting almost to hatred.

"Begin!" cried Adolf.

"Do begin," called Louise.

Still they hesitated. Then they flew and passed each other in the air. Deathly pale, they turned and flew again. He caught her, but she fell. They tried again, but he fell.

They began all over again, eye to eye, seeming to grow paler every moment. Both fell, Fritz first.

Louise and Adolf laughed aloud up on their swings.

"Well, this surely is your lucky day," Adolf called.

"Some one has given him the evil eye," Louise cried. And again they laughed together.

The other two continued their practice and failed again. Aimée let go, and Fritz scolded loudly down in the net. Finally they were all scolding, excited and angry, calling in loud shrill voices, — all but Aimée. She sat still with staring eyes, pale as death.

Fritz climbed back and they resumed work. Simultaneously the same rage flared up in both. Screaming they clutched each other, embracing wildly. It was no longer practice — it was a struggle. They no longer met, grasped, embraced; they wrestled rather, and seized one another like animals. Their bodies seemed aglow as they tested their strength in desperate battle. They did not stop. They no longer gave commands. Senselessly, blinded by brutal unconquerable hatred, they fought a desperate duel in the air.

Suddenly Aimée dropped with a scream. For a moment she lay motionless in the net. Fritz mounted to his swing, and with clenched teeth, his face set as a mask, regarded the woman he had vanquished.

He rose on the trapeze, announcing: "She cannot work any more. Let her take the upper swing; Louise can work here with me."

He spoke harshly, as though he had the right to command. No one replied, but slowly Louise began to glide from the dome to Aimée's swing. Aimée spoke not a word. Like a broken animal, she half raised herself in the net, and then climbed slowly up to the swing in the dome.

Work was resumed. But Fritz's strength was gone. His very bitterness reacted on him. His arms gave out; he fell, Louise falling upon him.

"What in the world is the matter with you?" cried Adolf. "Are you sick? You take the top; perhaps you can manage that. This will never do."

Fritz made no reply. He sat with bowed head, like one who has received a blow. Then he said, mumbling through clenched teeth, "Yes, we had better trade places — for today."

He climbed out of the net and walked away, the knuckles on his clenched hands glistening white. He thought he heard the attendants whispering his name, and sneaked past them, filled with shame, like a whipped dog.

In the dressing-room he dropped to the mattress. All sensation had left his body. He was conscious only of his eyes. How they smarted and burned! But there was no rest for him. He began to practice again. As one tortures an aching tooth, or presses one's finger on a boil, so he continued to test his weary limbs. He tried feverishly to execute this or that trick; but he could do nothing. Again he threw himself on the mattress, only to leap up and try again. These repeated struggles exhausted him completely, yet he refused to give up.

So the day passed. He never left the circus, but haunted the ring, like a bad conscience hovering about the scene of a crime.

In the evening he worked in the dome with Louise. He struggled like a maniac to make his stubborn limbs respond; desperately, he forced his quivering muscles to obey.

He succeeded: once, twice, again — He flew over, he flew back, then rested.

He saw nothing. Not the dome, nor the boxes, nor Adolf; only that distant trapeze, and Louise swinging in front of him. It seemed to him as though the pounding blood were going to burst his brain. Then he leaped, grasped for Louise's leg, and with a scream fell into the billowing net below.

There was not a sound in the whole huge building. All were silent, thinking he was dead.

Then Fritz lifted his shoulders. Where was he? With a tremendous effort, he recalled it all, — the arena, the net, the black frame-work of spectators, the boxes, and *her*. Overcome by despair, more through his humiliation than from the pain of the fall, he lifted his clenched fists and collapsed.

The three others had stopped their performance, and were calling con-

fusedly to each other. Adolf had at once dropped down a rope. He and two assistants lifted Fritz from the net, supporting him; so that he appeared to walk.

Finally Aimée slid slowly down the rope. She walked like a blind person, seeing nothing.

Two performers were standing at the entrance. "That net surely saved his life," said one.

"Yes, indeed," replied the other, "except for that, he would be cold and stiff by now."

Aimée gave a sudden start; she had heard the words, and as if she were seeing them for the first time, she measured with a single lingering glance the net, the ropes, and the swings — those fearfully high swings. One of the artists read her glance aright.

"They are damnably high," he said.

Aimée merely nodded, quite deliberately.

All was quiet again, and the performance continued.

In the dressing-room, Fritz had risen from the mattress and was standing before his mirror. He had not been injured, only stunned by the fall.

Adolf was busy dressing, and both were silent. Finally Adolf burst out: "You see for yourself, this can't go on."

Fritz did not answer, but averted his gaze from the pale face looking at him in the mirror. Just as Adolf was ready, they heard Louise rapping at the door.

"Won't you ever be ready?" demanded Adolf. "They are waiting for us."

Fritz took down his watch from the corner of the mirror, and went out to join the sisters, who were waiting in silence. They walked home in silence, too, Fritz beside Louise. The humiliation seared his very soul, as though it were a physical wound in his breast.

Fritz and Adolf had been in bed a long time, and Adolf was sleeping heavily with his mouth open, as acrobats usually do when their bodies lie relaxed in slumber. But Fritz could get no rest; he lay on his back, sleepless, in dull despair.

So it had happened, at last, and so soon! He was no longer fit for work. This one thought went round and round in his mind: no longer fit for work. Slowly, and with infinite weariness, he made it clear to himself, how it had all come about, day after day, night after night. Quietly and wearily, he visualized everything: the blue room, the high bed, himself and her; the yellow room with the lounge behind the screen, and the portraits on the wall, himself and her; the staircase where the lamp went out, himself and her; and the garden, in which he kept turning back.

And now it was all over. He was reaping what he had sown. Ah, he knew it well. Thus his thoughts kept drifting lazily, stupidly along. But even as he had been ruined so he would ruin her. Yes, he would do that.

Some night he would go there and unlock the door. Then when he was there with her (and his thoughts must pause to linger on the blue room, with himself and her), he would ring wildly to arouse the whole house, so that her husband and the servants and the maids should come and see her — *her!*

Yes, he could do this; he would! And suddenly, seeing it all before his eyes, he said: "That's what I'll do, and do it now!"

All repose left him. Why not do it now while the plan was fresh, his anger hot, his resolution strong? He would go immediately.

Rapidly, without turning on the light, he collected his clothes and dressed very quietly, in order not to awaken Adolf, while constantly before his eyes hovered the vision of himself and her in the middle of the blue room. There he would have his revenge.

In his haste, he knocked against a chair, and immediately sat down on the bed, overcome by fear lest Adolf might awake.

Then he went on dressing, with bated breath. He must go now!

A careless step disturbed Adolf, who, turning in bed, mumbled drowsily, "What the devil ails you?" And then added, "Where are you going?" Fritz did not answer. Half-dressed as he was, he crept under the bed clothes to hide, and found himself trembling like a trapped thief.

But soon after, hearing Adolf's regular breathing, he began again, dressing as he lay in bed, shivering with apprehension, as if he were stealing his own clothes.

Ready at last! He felt his way to the door, going carefully along the wall, crafty as a drunkard who is trying to creep towards his bottle without being seen.

And he succeeded in opening the door, closing it and sneaking down the stairs and out of the house. He felt that he had no more shame than a dog. He even said to himself, "Tomorrow I shan't be able to work, either." But with the logic of despair, he murmured, "I might as well go to the devil altogether."

He began to run faster and faster past the houses, keeping carefully in their shadows.

At home no one had heard him, except Aimée. She had gotten up and followed him, gliding down the stairs, out of the house, and along the other side of the street. Like one shadow pursuing another, she followed him through the silent streets.

Fritz reached the palace with the iron fence. He entered. His footsteps died away. Aimée stood hidden in a doorway opposite the palace window. She saw a light moving along the first floor, two shadows slipping past the lace curtains. There they were. The light reappeared, she saw the shadows again, upstairs. Then the light went out, and only a bluish glow glimmered in the last window.

With bated breath, in the throes of consuming jealousy, she stared at

those windows, while one picture after another came to torture her as she waited. All those mental visions that comprise the ultimate misery of the deserted, appeared before this acrobat girl, chaste though she still was. They seemed to be vividly depicted on that window pane, behind which *he* was, behind which *they* were, together. And her whole life that had been spent in self-sacrifice, her whole existence, filled with uncomplaining surrender, all her dearest hopes, all her tenderest thoughts, every dream for a life together vanished at once. Her whole life, bit by bit, memory after memory, thought upon thought, was shattered, engulfed, completely wiped out. Nothing was left her: no surrender, no tenderness, no willingness for sacrifice — nothing. How humiliated she felt, how alone; everything fell back into its elemental beginnings. There remained merely the all-powerful, all-destroying impulse.

Hours passed. Aimée felt she could suffer no more. Like a somnambulist she stared dully at the pale blue glow. Then the garden gate opened, and shut again. There he was! And Aimée in her agony, saw him walk slowly past her, a gray figure, in the gray light of the dawning day.

"Aimée," said Louise, as if she were trying to wake her sister, "are you asleep?" Aimée raised her arm automatically and bound up her long hair. "One would really think so," pursued Louise. Aimée was sitting in front of her mirror, in which she surveyed her reflection, without moving, as if two sleepers were staring at one another with open eyes.

Slowly she put on her blouse, got up, and went out with the same strange manner; it seemed as though she were following an apparition, she walked like an automaton, as if her soul had fallen asleep and her body were dead. Louise followed, and both went out into the dark place where Fritz was waiting on a swing. Aimée had never worked so well as she did today; in a mechanical rhythm she caught herself, let go, and flew. She was working with Fritz again, and her calmness seemed to react upon him. Like the lifeless cogs of a machine, they came together, separated, and came together again. Then they rested on opposite swings.

In all that great hall, Aimée's eyes were fixed on one thing, alone: his body. This agile body, this heaving breast, the gasping mouth, the hotly pulsating veins could all grow still and cold. His spring-like muscles, the hands that caught her, his neck, now so full of life, would all grow still and cold. His arms would be motionless, his muscles like stone, his forehead cold, his neck stiff and dead, his breast so high and still. Then his hand would drop, oh, so heavily if one were to lift it. Arms, legs, and hands — dead!

They worked again. They flew and then met. Every touch spurred her on: however warm he might be now, he should grow cold; however much he quivered now, he should suddenly become quite still. She no longer dwelt upon the reason, thought no more of herself. She saw always the vision of Fritz dead, — cold and lifeless. That was all.

And like one mentally deranged who keeps following his secret mania, she became sly and deceptive. Like an opium fiend, who lives only to satisfy his craving, she became wonderfully inventive. She developed the callousness of the monomaniac. She pursued Fritz whom she had so long shyly avoided. When the rehearsal was over, she commenced to work alone. She adapted all the exercises of the lower swings to the ones in the cupola. She called down to Fritz, detaining him in the ring, while she asked questions and solicited advice, flattering him as an apprentice does his master. She dared everything up there in the dome. She played with death, shamelessly enticing him. She kept watching his uncertainty, as if to gauge its extent. She sought help from the weakness that he tried so hard to hide. She attempted the most daring feats, crying: "We'll show them what we can do! We won't let them get ahead of us!"

So she lured him on. He gave advice, and finally climbed up the swaying rope to join her on the trapeze. Meanwhile she flew past him among the rattling swings. From trapeze to trapeze she flew over the yawning abyss. And he, driven by an irresistable impulse, began to follow her lead, while she spurred him on with her shouts. She had the strength of fever in her taut body, and he called upon his last ounce of endurance, as in a struggle for life and death.

She cried, "Ça va, ça va," and he swung into position and caught hold: "Ça va, ça va!"

The artists who were going in and out of the arena stood still to watch them. He grew ever more enthusiastic, daring all that she dared, as she led the way from swing to swing with wildly fluttering hair. They met and seized each other. How cold her body was!

Finally she stopped. But he continued practicing. She sat hunched on her swing, encouraging him with muffled growling comments. She sat in the dark and watched him. Fritz moaned, and in dropping seized the swinging rope, so that in the darkness, it looked as if he were falling all the way. Aimée remained on her swing. She heard him fall into the net, then walk out, over the soft sand of the ring.

It was dark. Only from the dome filtered down a subdued light. The whole tremendous building was wrapped in silence. Aimée continued to cower between the net and the rope; then she got up, making the hasps that held the swings and ropes rattle softly. She lifted and examined them; then, like a shadow, busied herself about something there in the dark. The brass knobs gleamed like cats' eyes, otherwise, all was dark. Softly the ropes rubbed against each other; that was the only sound.

Aimée busied herself for a long time up there in the dome. Then a loud voice sounded from below in the ring. It was Fritz, calling, "Aimée, Aimée!"

"I'm coming," she replied. Aimée seized the right hand rope, and slowly glided down hovering silently, for a moment, over the man waiting below.

Then she repeated, "I'm coming," and a moment later stood at his side.

The Four Devils were to have a benefit. It was the evening before, just after the performance; the audience was filing out of the circus. Adolf knocked on Aimée's and Louise's door, and all four of them walked along the hall. Not a word was spoken, and they quietly took their usual table in the restaurant. Their beer seidels were brought, and they drank in silence. Aimée's every motion, even the slightest like picking up her glass, seemed strangely deliberate and so slow it was as if she were doing everything to a dreary, measured tempo.

There was much noise in the restaurant. Bib and Bob were celebrating their birthday, and a circle of artists sat about their table. One of them was doing sleight-of-hand tricks, the clown Trip was imitating a certain Rigolo by coarsely swinging his hips from side to side. Only *The Devils* sat quietly in their corner. One by one, the ballet girls disappeared from their places along the wall, their anxious expectation relieved by the arrival of certain hurried gentlemen. At a side table some of the agents were playing cards.

The clowns continued their racket. One of them played an accordian, and half a dozen cri-cris replied. The clown Tom presented his colleague with a cabbage-head filled with snuff, and everyone began to sniffle and sneeze, in chorus. On a table, Trip was still imitating the evolutions of Rigolo.

But the *Devils* kept quiet.

The billposter came in with his jar and handbag, and began to paste up the next day's announcements on both bulletin boards. The name *Les Quatre Diables* appeared in three places.

Adolf got up and strolled over to inspect the program. He asked one of the agents to translate it, and the latter rose from the card table and slowly translated, while Adolf listened attentively.

"Assuring our honored audience and all our patrons that for this performance we shall offer everything in our power, we subscribe ourselves, respectfully,

Les Quatre Diables."

Adolf nodded as he followed the strange text word for word. Then he returned to his table, still staring at the placard with its peculiar lettering, finally remarking with a satisfied look: "Pretty lettering."

Louise and Fritz got up, too, and walked over to inspect it.

The cri-cris shrieked, enough to burst one's ear-drums. The clown Tom evoked music from little reed instruments which he inserted in his nostrils.

Even Aimée had risen. She stood behind Fritz and Louise, while the agent proceeded to translate the words over again:

"we subscribe ourselves respectfully,
Les Quatre Diables."

The cri-cris shrieked. Up on top of the table Trip continued his ridiculous gymnastics.

Then Aimée who was the last to join in, laughed loud and long, while the din gradually subsided, and the *Devils* went back to their places. Adolf took out the money, and pushed it over beside the seidels. The three others rose, but Fritz announced his intention of staying a little longer. He was not ready to go home.

"Good night," said Adolf and Louise.

"Good night," replied Fritz without moving. Aimée stood still. For a moment, she watched him appraisingly, as if she were haunted by the remembrance of the night before.

"A demain, Aimée," he said airily.

Slowly she turned her eyes aside and murmured, "good night."

She went out into the great hall, where it was dark. The sign poster had left his lantern on the floor, and in its glow the yellow paper of the billboard stood out. The two others were waiting in the doorway, but she followed them alone, past the tall silent houses. The windows looked down at her from massive stone façades with unfamiliar eyes. How clear the sky was! Aimée looked at the stars: she had been told they were worlds, other worlds, perhaps like ours.

Her gaze returned to the houses, doors, windows, lanterns, and paving stones; how strange they looked; she seemed to be seeing them for the first time.

"Aimée," called Louise.

"Yes, I'm coming." And again she stared at the rows of houses, dark and closed, between which their steps died away. Back of her, she faintly heard the cri-cris, the laughter of the clowns.

"Aimée," called Louise once more.

"Yes." Aimée overtook the others again. The two were standing arm in arm in the light of a street lamp, waiting for her. Louise threw back her head with an impatient little sigh.

"Good heavens," she exclaimed, "aren't you coming at all?" And leaning on Adolf's arm, under the glow of the lantern, she looked down the dead and unfamiliar street, through which they had just come, and remarked: "I like a street like this." Then with a laugh, she began to repeat those highly amusing words: "we subscribe ourselves respectfully," adding as an afterthought, as she looked down the dark street, "I wonder what it's called?"

"Oh," replied Adolf, "one passes so many little streets." And they went on, past the next row of houses.

Fritz had remained behind. The others at the clown table had invited

him to have a glass of beer, but he shook his head. One of the clowns called out, "He has something better. Good-night!" And all of them burst out laughing. By this time, Bib and Bob had constructed a fishing rod, and were angling all the artists' hats down from the clothes racks.

Fritz got up and strolled over to the door that opened directly on the street. He sat down at a table on the terrace under some laurel trees. An intense feeling of boredom, an indescribable disgust overwhelmed him. He watched the whispering couples who were walking up and down, affectionately close to each other. In the dark, they occasionally kissed, and laughed lovingly. The women pirouetted, and the men strutted and showed off like beasts of the field in the mating season.

Suddenly Fritz gave a sharp, harsh laugh.

He thought of the clown Tim, whom they called The Gentleman With the Dogs. Yes, Tim was right. He visualized Tim with his quiet, motionless, melancholy features, like a statue's with the delicate, red, curved, and pathetic mouth — a woman's mouth, it was.

Fritz recalled him at home in his lodgings, in his big room, where he had constructed an entire house for his dogs, a two-story house in which all the dogs lived. There lay the animals, each in his own little cubicle, their heads thrust through the openings, staring into space with eyes as pathetic as those of the clown himself. And he had sat in their midst. What a quiet company it was! All these dogs had been castrated, — and Tim thought them more human than people. Yes, he was right: people are animals, and the moments in which we really *live* are bestial.

They are animals, that want to be satisfied; they are fools, all of them.

We take care of ourselves, working with the most tremendous effort. We give days, years, our youth, our strength, the freshness of our brain, and one day the animal in us rears his head — the fundamental animal that is in us all.

Fritz laughed. Involuntarily he was conscious of his body, of which he had taken such meticulous care all his life, and which he had ruined in the last three months.

One of the artists came out of the door. He waited a moment, then his wife joined him, and they trotted awkwardly down the sidewalk. Fritz looked after them and continued to laugh. How about those who get married? Didn't they sacrifice their bodies, when they mated for life, ate their daily bread, and had children? Like fat drones they swelled up; developed paunches through their regular habits of life. And they raised children to carry on this existence.

Fools, fools!

Fritz stood looking after the strolling couples that grew more and more affectionate, and disappeared into the shadows.

Within, the clowns continued their racket. The cri-cris shrieked, the sound floating over the heads of all, and reaching the people in the street, like a hymn to foolishness.

Fritz got up, and tossing a coin on the table, walked away. In the restaurant the noise increased. They howled, screamed, and laughed. Fritz began to sing. Whistling, screeching, cackling, they all joined in. With clownish grimaces, gestures of the ring, and mouths awry, they began to sing:

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

Outside on the terrace everyone stood still, the couples peeped in at the windows, laughing merrily. Then two or three of them took up the melody of the clowns. Far out into the darkness, floated the air:

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

From out on the terrace Fritz watched the ridiculous clowns within, and the amorous couples without, all swaying their heads in time to the music. Suddenly the acrobat began to laugh, wildly, insanely, unable to control himself, as he leaned against a lamp post for support.

A policeman walked up to him, and stared surprised at this gentleman in a high hat who was disturbing the peace. But the gentleman continued to laugh hysterically, as he tried to sing:

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

Then even the policeman began to laugh, without realizing why, as the song swelled lustily within.

Fritz turned sharply on his heel and went — to her.

The applause resounded, and Louise appeared again.

Then the attendants began to fold up the big net. It sounded like the furling of the mainsail. The music had stopped.

"Monsieur Fritz and Mademoiselle Aimée are going to perform their great leap without the net."

Several attendants began to rake the sand of the ring. Now all was ready. Like a guard at salute, the attendants waited, while the strains of *The Love Waltz* were heard again.

Fritz and Aimée entered hand in hand. Bowing their thanks, they stood amid the flowers that had been tossed to them. Then they climbed up the long ropes, followed by thousands of eyes.

For an instant, they rested side by side.

A shudder swept over the crowd, as Fritz let go and flew across.

Never before had they worked more surely. In the breathless hush, their hands grasped the rattling swings squarely and firmly.

Fritz flew over and back. Aimée's eyes were fixed upon him, large and dull, like two lamps about to go out.

The waltz swelled louder; the play of the swings more violent.

As from a single, suffocating breast, came an apprehensive murmur of applause.

Aimée unbound her hair, as if she wished to wrap herself in a dark cloak. Standing upright, she waited in the swing for Fritz.

Their great leaps now began. They flew, they rushed across. Their words sounded like bird cries above the music, and thousands watched in troubled bewilderment.

"Aimée, du courage!"

He flew.

"Enfin du courage!"

He seized the bar again.

Aimée saw only him, his body fairly seemed to glow. The applause resounded once more, while the waltz swelled, fairly triumphed.

Fritz was waiting for her.

Aimée knew nothing more, except that suddenly she raised her hand, and swung far out on the swaying bar, unfastened the hasp on which it hung.

And Fritz flew over.

She saw no more; there was no scream. Only a sound as if a bag of sand had struck the floor.

For the fraction of a second Aimée waited on her swing: now she knew that death was a delight. She let go, screamed and plunged into the chasm below.

As if all bonds had burst, hundreds had fled in horror. Men leaped the barriers and dashed off, women streamed through the aisles in flight. No one waited, everyone fled. The women screamed as if they were being stabbed.

Three physicians ran up, and knelt beside the bodies.

Then everything was still. As if they wished to hide, the performers crept into their dressing-rooms, shuddering at every sound.

An attendant whispered something to the physicians. The bodies were picked up and laid upon the same piece of canvas. Silently they were carried out, through the aisle, through the stable, where the horses became restless in their stalls. The artists followed, a queer procession of mourners, in the various costumes of the pantomime.

The big baggage van stood ready. Adolf got in and placed them on the floor, side by side in the dark, first Aimée, then his brother. How dully their hands dropped back to the floor of the baggage wagon.

Then the door was closed.

A woman shrieked, and rushing forward, clung to the wagon. It was Louise. They slowly carried her away.

Just then one of the waiters from the restaurant came running along the cold, bare hall, frightened, as if he had seen a ghost amid all this brightness.

He was calling for a doctor. A woman, he said, was lying in convulsions in the restaurant. One of the three physicians ran up, and a carriage was sent for. It drove up, with gorgeous escutcheons on the panels, and a lady was led out to it, supported by the physician.

Her equipage was forced to wait a moment. The narrow street was blocked by the big baggage van.

Then the equipage passed it and drove on.

In the street were bright lights and a great crowd. Two young men were standing under a lantern. With happy watchful glances they surveyed the busy square. Two others walked up to them, and related the "event." They cursed a little; all was described with much gesticulation. Then the two news-carriers moved on.

The first two gentlemen stood still. One of them struck the paving stones with his stick.

"Well," he said, "mon dieu, les pauvres diables."

And forthwith, their eyes fixed on the milling crowd, they began to hum:

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

Their silver-headed canes gleamed. The young men sauntered away in their long coats.

Amour, amour,
Oh, bel oiseau,
Chante, chante,
Chante toujours.

The United States

INTRODUCTION

THERE was very little original fiction in the literature of the United States before the Revolution, and not much more before the advent of Washington Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe in the first part of the Nineteenth Century, although Charles Brockden Brown is usually considered the first American novelist. Fenimore Cooper, a few years Brown's junior, won international fame by his long novels of Indian and pioneer life, but he made no attempt to write shorter works of fiction. Washington Irving was the first to succeed in the short novel form: his *Rip Van Winkle* is a particularly happy example. Poe was, of course, supreme as a short story writer, and so was Hawthorne, but the former tried his hand at only one narrative that was not, strictly speaking, a short story. Hawthorne, on the other hand, was probably greater as a novelist than as a short story writer. Among the more important of Poe's followers were Rose Terry Cooke, and Fitz-James O'Brien, both short story writers.

From the days of Poe down to the present time a host of writers have brought the short story to a high point of technical excellence. Among these were Frank R. Stockton, H. C. Bunner, Mark Twain, W. D. Howells, Sarah Orne Jewett, Bret Harte, Henry James and O. Henry. The best traditions of the past have been carried on by such writers as Willa Cather and Sherwood Anderson.

The short novel was a favorite with Henry James. Some of his most distinguished work he cast in this form. *Daisy Miller* is one of the finest examples of the form in the whole range of American literature. Both Mary E. Wilkins Freeman and Lafcadio Hearn have been equally successful in the short story and the short novel forms.

Of all the recent writers Joseph Hergesheimer has best understood the short novel. His early work includes two or three of the best short novels in American literature.

WASHINGTON IRVING

(1783–1859)

Washington Irving was born in New York City in 1783, during the British occupation. He spent most of the years of his maturity abroad, in the diplomatic service. He was the author of numerous historical, descriptive and biographical works, but the most popular and beloved of all his writings is *The Sketch Book,* originally published in 1819.

Rip Van Winkle is the shortest narrative in the present collection. In spite of its brevity, it is in conception a short novel.

It is reprinted, with modernised spelling, from *The Sketch Book,* New York, 1919.

RIP VAN WINKLE

A Posthumous Writing of Diedrich Knickerbocker

By Woden, God of Saxons,
From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday,
Truth is a thing that ever I will keep
Unto thylke day in which I creep into
My sepulchre. — Cartwright.

WHOEVER has made a voyage up the Hudson, must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains; and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapours about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village of great antiquity, having

been founded by some of the Dutch colonists, in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in peace!) and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks.

In that same village, and in one of these very houses (which to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple, good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple good-natured man; he was moreover a kind neighbour, and an obedient henpecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation, and a curtain lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing; and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favourite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles, and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossippings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighbourhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labour. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbour, even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn or building stone fences. The women of the village, too, used to employ him

to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them; — in a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some outdoor work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighbourhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family.

Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife, so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house — the only side which, in truth, belongs to a henpecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much henpecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honourable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods — but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house, his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van

Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle, as years of matrimony rolled on: a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edge tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village, which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of his majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade, of a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions which sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands, from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junta were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun, and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbours could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sun-dial. It is true, he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent, and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds, and sometimes taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapour curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this strong hold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage, and call the members all to nought; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair, and his only alternative to escape from the labour of the farm and the clamour of his wife, was to take gun in hand, and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it;

but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee! " Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind, on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favourite sport of squirrel-shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees, he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village; and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend he heard a voice from a distance hallooing, " Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle! " He looked around, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air, " Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle! " — at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him: he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place, but supposing it to be some one of the neighbourhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach, he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion — a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist — several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulders a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and

assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity, and mutually relieving each other, they clambored up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine or rather cleft between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which, impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky, and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time, Rip and his companion had laboured on in silence; for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe, and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at nine-pins. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion: some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too, were peculiar; one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colours. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high-crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlour of Dominie Van Schaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip, was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such a fixed statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon

the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees, Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavour of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another, and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often, that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll from whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes — it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with the keg of liquor — the mountain ravine — the wild retreat among the rocks — the wo-begone party at nine-pins — the flagon — "Oh! that wicked flagon!" thought Rip — "what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?"

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel encrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysters of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him, and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip, "and if this frolic should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle." With some difficulty he got down into the glen; he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel; and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grape vines that twisted their coils and tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from

the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? The morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village, he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture, induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs too, not one of which he recognised for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered: it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors — strange faces at the windows — everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but a day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains — there ran the silver Hudson at a distance — there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been — Rip was sorely perplexed — "That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay — the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog, that looked like Wolf, was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed. — "My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears — he called loudly for his wife and children; the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn — but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken, and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red night-cap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes — all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognised on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe, but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco smoke, instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens — election — members of Congress — liberty — Bunker's hill — heroes of seventy-six — and other words that were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long, grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and the army of women and children that had gathered at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded round him, eyeing him from head to foot, with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and drawing him partly aside, inquired, "on which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "whether he was Federal or Democrat." Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm a-kimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, "what brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?"

"Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor, quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the King, God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders — " a tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him! "

It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking. The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbours, who used to keep about the tavern.

" Well — who are they? — name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, " Where's Nicholas Vedder? "

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin, piping voice, " Nicholas Vedder? why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tomb-stone in the church-yard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too."

" Where's Brom Dutcher? "

" Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony-Point — others say he was drowned in the squall, at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know — he never came back again."

" Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster? "

" He went off to the wars, too; was a great militia general, and is now in Congress."

Rip's heart died away, at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him, too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war — Congress — Stony-Point! — he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, " Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle? "

" Oh, Rip Van Winkle! " exclaimed two or three. " Oh to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself as he went up the mountain; apparently as lazy and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

" God knows," exclaimed he at his wit's end; " I'm not myself — I'm somebody else — that's me yonder — no — that's somebody else, got into my shoes — I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and every thing's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am! "

The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief; at the very suggestion of which, the self-important man with the cocked

hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh comely woman passed through the throng to get a peep at the gray-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. " Hush, Rip," cried she, " hush, you little fool; the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind.

" What is your name, my good woman? " asked he.

" Judith Gardenier."

" And your father's name? "

" Ah, poor man, his name was Rip Van Winkle; it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since — his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl."

Rip had but one question more to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

" Where's your mother? "

Oh, she too had died but a short time since: she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New-England pedlar.

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. " I am your father! " cried he — " Young Rip Van Winkle once — old Rip Van Winkle now! — Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle! "

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment, exclaimed, " Sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle — it is himself. Welcome home again, old neighbour — Why, where have you been these twenty long years? "

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbours stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks; and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head — upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighbourhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick

Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the Half-moon, being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at nine-pins in a hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced a hereditary disposition to attend to anything else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favour.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can do nothing with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench, at the inn door, and was reverenced as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war — that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England — and that, instead of being a subject of his majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was — petticoat government. Happily, that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed, at first, to vary on some points every time he told it, which was doubtless owing to his having so recently awakened. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighbourhood, but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty.

The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day, they never hear a thunder-storm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of nine-pins: and it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighbourhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

HENRY JAMES

(1843–1915)

HENRY JAMES was born in New York City in 1843. His earliest schooling was received in Europe. On his return to America he began writing, but in the early Seventies he settled in England where, except for short trips to his native land and elsewhere, he spent the remainder of his life. Not long before his death he became a British subject.

James devoted his life to the writing of a long series of novels, stories, and tales, mostly about modern Americans abroad, and English people at home.

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DAISY MILLER

PART I

AT THE little town of Vevay, in Switzerland, there is a particularly comfortable hotel. There are, indeed, many hotels; for the entertainment of tourists is the business of the place, which, as many travellers will remember, is seated upon the edge of a remarkably blue lake — a lake that it behooves every tourist to visit. The shore of the lake presents an unbroken array of establishments of this order, of every category, from the "grand hotel" of the newest fashion, with a chalk-white front, a hundred balconies, and a dozen flags flying from its roof, to the little Swiss *pension* of an elder day, with its name inscribed in German-looking lettering upon a pink or yellow wall, and an awkward summer-house in the angle of the garden. One of the hotels at Vevay, however, is famous, even classical, being distinguished from many of its upstart neighbors by an air both of luxury and of maturity. In this region, in the month of June, American travellers are extremely numerous; it may be said, indeed, that Vevay assumes at this period some of the characteristics of an American watering-place. There are sights and sounds which evoke a vision, an echo, of Newport and Saratoga. There is a flitting hither and thither of "stylish" young girls, a rustling of muslin flounces, a rattle of dance-music in the morning hours, a sound of high-pitched voices at all times. You receive an impression of these things at the excellent inn of the Trois Couronnes, and are

transported in fancy to the Ocean House or to Congress Hall. But at the Trois Couronnes, it must be added, there are other features that are much at variance with these suggestions: neat German waiters, who look like secretaries of legation; Russian princesses sitting in the garden; little Polish boys walking about, held by the hand, with their governors; a view of the sunny crest of the Dent du Midi and the picturesque towers of the Castle of Chillon.

I hardly know whether it was the analogies or the differences that were uppermost in the mind of a young American, who, two or three years ago, sat in the garden of the Trois Couronnes, looking about him, rather idly, at some of the graceful objects I have mentioned. It was a beautiful summer morning, and in whatever fashion the young American looked at things they must have seemed to him charming. He had come from Geneva the day before by the little steamer to see his aunt, who was staying at the hotel — Geneva having been for a long time his place of residence. But his aunt had a headache — his aunt had almost always a headache — and now she was shut up in her room, smelling camphor, so that he was at liberty to wander about. He was some seven-and-twenty years of age. When his friends spoke of him, they usually said that he was at Geneva "studying;" when his enemies spoke of him, they said — but, after all, he had no enemies; he was an extremely amiable fellow, and universally liked. What I should say is, simply, that when certain persons spoke of him they affirmed that the reason of his spending so much time at Geneva was that he was extremely devoted to a lady who lived there — a foreign lady — a person older than himself. Very few Americans — indeed, I think none — had ever seen this lady, about whom there were some singular stories. But Winterbourne had an old attachment for the little metropolis of Calvinism; he had been put to school there as a boy, and he had afterwards gone to college there — circumstances which had led to his forming a great many youthful friendships. Many of these he had kept, and they were a source of great satisfaction to him.

After knocking at his aunt's door, and learning that she was indisposed, he had taken a walk about the town, and then he had come in to his breakfast. He had now finished his breakfast; but he was drinking a small cup of coffee, which had been served to him on a little table in the garden by one of the waiters who looked like an attaché. At last he finished his coffee and lit a cigarette. Presently a small boy came walking along the path — an urchin of nine or ten. The child, who was diminutive for his years, had an aged expression of countenance: a pale complexion, and sharp little features. He was dressed in knickerbockers, with red stockings, which displayed his poor little spindle-shanks; he also wore a brilliant red cravat. He carried in his hand a long alpenstock, the sharp point of which he thrust into everything that he approached — the flower-beds, the garden-

benches, the trains of the ladies' dresses. In front of Winterbourne he paused, looking at him with a pair of bright, penetrating little eyes.

" Will you give me a lump of sugar? " he asked, in a sharp, hard little voice — a voice immature, and yet, somehow, not young.

Winterbourne glanced at the small table near him, on which his coffee-service rested, and saw that several morsels of sugar remained. " Yes, you may take one," he answered; " but I don't think sugar is good for little boys."

This little boy stepped forward and carefully selected three of the coveted fragments, two of which he buried in the pocket of his knickerbockers, depositing the other as promptly in another place. He poked his alpenstock, lance-fashion, into Winterbourne's bench, and tried to crack the lump of sugar with his teeth.

" Oh, blazes; it's har-r-d! " he exclaimed, pronouncing the adjective in a peculiar manner.

Winterbourne had immediately perceived that he might have the honor of claiming him as a fellow-countryman. " Take care you don't hurt your teeth," he said, paternally.

" I haven't got any teeth to hurt. They have all come out. I have only got seven teeth. My mother counted them last night, and one came out right afterwards. She said she'd slap me if any more came out. I can't help it. It's this old Europe. It's the climate that makes them come out. In America they didn't come out. It's these hotels."

Winterbourne was much amused. " If you eat three lumps of sugar, your mother will certainly slap you," he said.

" She's got to give me some candy, then," rejoined his young interlocutor. " I can't get any candy here — any American candy. American candy's the best candy."

" And are American little boys the best little boys? " asked Winterbourne.

I don't know. I'm an American boy," said the child.

I see you are one of the best! " laughed Winterbourne.

" Are you an American man? " pursued this vivacious infant. And then, on Winterbourne's affirmative reply — " American men are the best! " he declared.

His companion thanked him for the compliment; and the child, who had now got astride of his alpenstock, stood looking about him, while he attacked a second lump of sugar. Winterbourne wondered if he himself had been like this in his infancy, for he had been brought to Europe at about this age.

" Here comes my sister! " cried the child, in a moment. " She's an American girl."

Winterbourne looked along the path and saw a beautiful young lady

advancing. "American girls are the best girls!" he said, cheerfully, to his young companion.

"My sister ain't the best!" the child declared. "She's always blowing at me."

"I imagine that is your fault, not hers," said Winterbourne. The young lady meanwhile had drawn near. She was dressed in white muslin, with a hundred frills and flounces, and knots of pale-colored ribbon. She was bareheaded; but she balanced in her hand a large parasol, with a deep border of embroidery; and she was strikingly, admirably pretty. "How pretty they are!" thought Winterbourne, straightening himself in his seat, as if he were prepared to rise.

The young lady paused in front of his bench, near the parapet of the garden, which overlooked the lake. The little boy had now converted his alpenstock into a vaulting-pole, by the aid of which he was springing about in the gravel, and kicking it up a little.

"Randolph," said the young lady, "what *are* you doing?"

"I'm going up the Alps," replied Randolph. "This is the way!" And he gave another little jump, scattering the pebbles about Winterbourne's ears.

"That's the way they come down," said Winterbourne.

"He's an American man!" cried Randolph, in his little hard voice.

The young lady gave no heed to this announcement, but looked straight at her brother. "Well, I guess you had better be quiet." she simply observed.

It seemed to Winterbourne that he had been in a manner presented. He got up and stepped slowly towards the young girl, throwing away his cigarette. "This little boy and I have made acquaintance," he said, with great civility. In Geneva, as he had been perfectly aware, a young man was not at liberty to speak to a young unmarried lady except under certain rarely occurring conditions; but here at Vevay, what conditions could be better than these? — a pretty American girl coming and standing in front of you in a garden. This pretty American girl, however, on hearing Winterbourne's observation, simply glanced at him; she then turned her head and looked over the parapet, at the lake and the opposite mountains. He wondered whether he had gone too far; but he decided that he must advance farther, rather than retreat. While he was thinking of something else to say, the young lady turned to the little boy again.

"I should like to know where you got that pole?" she said.

"I bought it," responded Randolph.

"You don't mean to say you're going to take it to Italy?"

"Yes, I am going to take it to Italy," the child declared.

The young girl glanced over the front of her dress, and smoothed out a knot or two of ribbon. Then she rested her eyes upon the prospect again. "Well, I guess you had better leave it somewhere," she said, after a moment.

" Are you going to Italy? " Winterbourne inquired, in a tone of great respect.

The young lady glanced at him again. " Yes, sir," she replied. And she said nothing more.

" Are you — a — going over the Simplon? " Winterbourne pursued, a little embarrassed.

" I don't know," she said. " I suppose it's some mountain. Randolph, what mountain are we going over? "

" Going where? " the child demanded.

" To Italy," Winterbourne explained.

" I don't know," said Randolph. " I don't want to go to Italy. I want to go to America."

" Oh, Italy is a beautiful place! " rejoined the young man.

" Can you get candy there? " Randolph loudly inquired.

" I hope not," said his sister. " I guess you have had enough candy, and mother thinks so, too."

" I haven't had any for ever so long — for a hundred weeks! " cried the boy, still jumping about.

The young lady inspected her flounces and smoothed her ribbons again, and Winterbourne presently risked an observation upon the beauty of the view. He was ceasing to be embarrassed, for he had begun to perceive that she was not in the least embarrassed herself. There had not been the slightest alteration in her charming complexion; she was evidently neither offended nor fluttered. If she looked another way when he spoke to her, and seemed not particularly to hear him, this was simply her habit, her manner. Yet, as he talked a little more, and pointed out some of the objects of interest in the view, with which she appeared quite unacquainted, she gradually gave him more of the benefit of her glance; and then he saw that this glance was perfectly direct and unshrinking. It was not, however, what would have been called an immodest glance, for the young girl's eyes were singularly honest and fresh. They were wonderfully pretty eyes; and, indeed, Winterbourne had not seen for a long time anything prettier than his fair countrywoman's various features — her complexion, her nose, her ears, her teeth. He had a great relish for feminine beauty; he was addicted to observing and analyzing it; and as regards this young lady's face he made several observations. It was not at all insipid, but it was not exactly expressive; and though it was eminently delicate, Winterbourne mentally accused it — very forgivingly — of a want of finish. He thought it very possible that Master Randolph's sister was a coquette; he was sure she had a spirit of her own; but in her bright, sweet, superficial little visage there was no mockery, no irony. Before long it became obvious that she was much disposed towards conversation. She told him that they were going to Rome for the winter — she and her mother and Randolph. She asked him if he was a " real American "; she shouldn't have taken him

for one; he seemed more like a German — this was said after a little hesitation — especially when he spoke. Winterbourne, laughing, answered that he had met Germans who spoke like Americans; but that he had not, so far as he remembered, met an American who spoke like a German. Then he asked her if she should not be more comfortable in sitting upon the bench which he had just quitted. She answered that she liked standing up and walking about; but she presently sat down. She told him she was from New York State — "if you know where that is." Winterbourne learned more about her by catching hold of her small, slippery brother, and making him stand a few minutes by his side.

"Tell me your name, my boy," he said.

"Randolph C. Miller," said the boy, sharply. "And I'll tell you her name;" and he levelled his alpenstock at his sister.

"You had better wait till you are asked!" said this young lady, calmly.

"I should like very much to know your name," said Winterbourne.

"Her name is Daisy Miller!" cried the child. "But that isn't her real name; that isn't her name on her cards."

"It's a pity you haven't got one of my cards!" said Miss Miller.

"Her real name is Annie P. Miller," the boy went on.

"Ask him *his* name," said his sister, indicating Winterbourne.

But on this point Randolph seemed perfectly indifferent; he continued to supply information in regard to his own family. "My father's name is Ezra B. Miller," he announced. "My father ain't in Europe; my father's in a better place than Europe."

Winterbourne imagined for a moment that this was the manner in which the child had been taught to intimate that Mr. Miller had been removed to the sphere of celestial rewards. But Randolph immediately added, "My father's in Schenectady. He's got a big business. My father's rich, you bet!"

"Well!" ejaculated Miss Miller, lowering her parasol and looking at the embroidered border. Winterbourne presently released the child, who departed, dragging his alpenstock along the path. "He doesn't like Europe," said the young girl. "He wants to go back."

"To Schenectady, you mean?"

"Yes; he wants to go right home. He hasn't got any boys here. There is one boy here, but he always goes round with a teacher; they won't let him play."

"And your brother hasn't any teacher?" Winterbourne inquired.

"Mother thought of getting him one to travel round with us. There was a lady told her of a very good teacher; an American lady — perhaps you know her — Mrs. Sanders. I think she came from Boston. She told her of this teacher, and we thought of getting him to travel round with us. But Randolph said he didn't want a teacher travelling round with us. He said he wouldn't have lessons when he was in the cars. And we

are in the cars about half the time. There was an English lady we met in the cars — I think her name was Miss Featherstone; perhaps you know her. She wanted to know why I didn't give Randolph lessons — give him 'instructions,' she called it. I guess he could give me more instruction than I could give him. He's very smart."

"Yes," said Winterbourne; "he seems very smart."

"Mother's going to get a teacher for him as soon as we get to Italy. Can you get good teachers in Italy?"

"Very good, I should think," said Winterbourne.

"Or else she's going to find some school. He ought to learn some more. He's only nine. He's going to college." And in this way Miss Miller continued to converse upon the affairs of her family, and upon other topics. She sat there with her extremely pretty hands, ornamented with very brilliant rings, folded in her lap, and with her pretty eyes now resting upon those of Winterbourne, now wandering over the garden, the people who passed by, and the beautiful view. She talked to Winterbourne as if she had known him a long time. He found it very pleasant. It was many years since he had heard a young girl talk so much. It might have been said of this unknown young lady, who had come and sat down beside him upon a bench, that she chattered. She was very quiet; she sat in a charming, tranquil attitude, but her lips and her eyes were constantly moving. She had a soft, slender, agreeable voice, and her tone was decidedly sociable. She gave Winterbourne a history of her movements and intentions, and those of her mother and brother, in Europe, and enumerated, in particular, the various hotels at which they had stopped. "That English lady in the cars," she said — "Miss Featherstone — asked me if we didn't all live in hotels in America. I told her I had never been in so many hotels in my life as since I came to Europe. I have never seen so many — it's nothing but hotels." But Miss Miller did not make this remark with a querulous accent; she appeared to be in the best humor with everything. She declared that the hotels were very good, when once you got used to their ways, and that Europe was perfectly sweet. She was not disappointed — not a bit. Perhaps it was because she had heard so much about it before. She had ever so many intimate friends that had been there ever so many times. And then she had had ever so many dresses and things from Paris. Whenever she put on a Paris dress she felt as if she were in Europe.

"It was a kind of a wishing-cap," said Winterbourne.

"Yes," said Miss Miller, without examining this analogy; "it always made me wish I was here. But I needn't have done that for dresses. I am sure they send all the pretty ones to America; you see the most frightful things here. The only thing I don't like," she proceeded, "is the society. There isn't any society; or, if there is, I don't know where it keeps itself. Do you? I suppose there is some society somewhere, but I haven't seen anything of it. I'm very fond of society, and I have always had a

great deal of it. I don't mean only in Schenectady, but in New York. I used to go to New York every winter. In New York I had lots of society. Last winter I had seventeen dinners given me; and three of them were by gentlemen," added Daisy Miller. "I have more friends in New York than in Schenectady — more gentleman friends; and more young lady friends, too," she resumed in a moment. She paused again for an instant; she was looking at Winterbourne with all her prettiness in her lively eyes, and in her light, slightly monotonous smile. "I have always had," she said, "a great deal of gentlemen's society."

Poor Winterbourne was amused, perplexed, and decidedly charmed. He had never yet heard a young girl express herself in just this fashion — never, at least, save in cases where to say such things seemed a kind of demonstrative evidence of a certain laxity of deportment. And yet was he to accuse Miss Daisy Miller of actual or potential *inconduite,* as they said at Geneva? He felt that he lived at Geneva so long that he had lost a good deal; he had become dishabituated to the American tone. Never, indeed, since he had grown old enough to appreciate things had he encountered a young American girl of so pronounced a type as this. Certainly she was very charming, but how deucedly sociable! Was she simply a pretty girl from New York State? were they all like that, the pretty girls who had a good deal of gentlemen's society? Or was she also a designing, an audacious, an unscrupulous young person? Winterbourne had lost his instinct in this matter, and his reason could not help him. Miss Daisy Miller looked extremely innocent. Some people had told him that, after all, American girls were exceedingly innocent; and others had told him that, after all, they were not. He was inclined to think Miss Daisy Miller was a flirt — a pretty American flirt. He had never, as yet, had any relations with young ladies of this category. He had known, here in Europe, two or three women — persons older than Miss Daisy Miller, and provided, for respectability's sake, with husbands — who were great coquettes — dangerous, terrible women, with whom one's relations were liable to take a serious turn. But this young girl was not a coquette in that sense; she was very unsophisticated; she was only a pretty American flirt. Winterbourne was almost grateful for having found the formula that applied to Miss Daisy Miller. He leaned back in his seat; he remarked to himself that she had the most charming nose he had ever seen; he wondered what were the regular conditions and limitations of one's intercourse with a pretty American flirt. It presently became apparent that he was on the way to learn.

"Have you been to that old castle?" asked the young girl, pointing with her parasol to the far-gleaming walls of the Château de Chillon.

"Yes, formerly, more than once," said Winterbourne. "You too, I suppose, have seen it?"

"No; we haven't been there. I want to go there dreadfully. Of course

I mean to go there. I wouldn't go away from here without having seen that old castle."

"It's a very pretty excursion," said Winterbourne, "and very easy to make. You can drive or go by the little steamer."

"You can go in the cars," said Miss Miller.

"Yes; you can go in the cars," Winterbourne assented.

"Our courier says they take you right up to the castle," the young girl continued. "We were going last week; but my mother gave out. She suffers dreadfully from dyspepsia. She said she couldn't go. Randolph wouldn't go, either; he says he doesn't think much of old castles. But I guess we'll go this week, if we can get Randolph."

"Your brother is not interested in ancient monuments?" Winterbourne inquired, smiling.

"He says he don't care much about old castles. He's only nine. He wants to stay at the hotel. Mother's afraid to leave him alone, and the courier won't stay with him; so we haven't been to many places. But it will be too bad if we don't go up there." And Miss Miller pointed again at the Château de Chillon.

"I should think it might be arranged," said Winterbourne. "Couldn't you get some one to stay for the afternoon with Randolph?"

Miss Miller looked at him a moment, and then very placidly, "I wish *you* would stay with him!" she said.

Winterbourne hesitated a moment. "I should much rather go to Chillon with you."

"With me?" asked the young girl, with the same placidity.

She didn't rise, blushing, as a young girl at Geneva would have done; and yet Winterbourne, conscious that he had been very bold, thought it possible that she was offended. "With your mother," he answered, very respectfully.

But it seemed that both his audacity and his respect were lost upon Miss Daisy Miller. "I guess my mother won't go, after all," she said. "She don't like to ride round in the afternoon. But did you really mean what you said just now, that you would like to go up there?"

"Most earnestly," Winterbourne declared.

"Then we may arrange it. If mother will stay with Randolph, I guess Eugenio will."

"Eugenio?" the young man inquired.

"Eugenio's our courier. He doesn't like to stay with Randolph; he's the most fastidious man I ever saw. But he's a splendid courier. I guess he'll stay at home with Randolph if mother does, and then we can go to the castle."

Winterbourne reflected for an instant as lucidly as possible — "we" could only mean Miss Daisy Miller and himself. This programme seemed almost too agreeable for credence; he felt as if he ought to kiss the young

lady's hand. Possibly he would have done so, and quite spoiled the project; but at this moment another person, presumably Eugenio, appeared. A tall, handsome man, with superb whiskers, wearing a velvet morning-coat and a brilliant watch-chain, approached Miss Miller, looking sharply at her companion. "Oh, Eugenio!" said Miss Miller, with the friendliest accent.

Eugenio had looked at Winterbourne from head to foot; he now bowed gravely to the young lady. "I have the honor to inform mademoiselle that luncheon is upon the table."

Miss Miller slowly rose. "See here, Eugenio!" she said; "I'm going to that old castle, anyway."

"To the Château de Chillon, mademoiselle?" the courier inquired. "Mademoiselle has made arrangements?" he added, in a tone which struck Winterbourne as very impertinent.

Eugenio's tone apparently threw, even to Miss Miller's own apprehension, a slightly ironical light upon the young girl's situation. She turned to Winterbourne, blushing a little — a very little. "You won't back out?" she said.

"I shall not be happy till we go!" he protested.

"And you are staying in this hotel?" she went on. "And you are really an American?"

The courier stood looking at Winterbourne offensively. The young man, at least, thought his manner of looking an offence to Miss Miller; it conveyed an imputation that she "picked up" acquaintances. "I shall have the honor of presenting to you a person who will tell you all about me," he said, smiling, and referring to his aunt.

"Oh, well, we'll go some day," said Miss Miller. And she gave him a smile and turned away. She put up her parasol and walked back to the inn beside Eugenio. Winterbourne stood looking after her; and as she moved away, drawing her muslin furbelows over the gravel, said to himself that she had the *tournure* of a princess.

He had, however, engaged to do more than proved feasible, in promising to present his aunt, Mrs. Costello, to Miss Daisy Miller. As soon as the former lady had got better of her headache he waited upon her in her apartment; and, after the proper inquiries in regard to her health, he asked her if she had observed in the hotel an American family — a mamma, a daughter, and a little boy.

"And a courier?" said Mrs. Costello. "Oh yes, I have observed them. Seen them — heard them — and kept out of their way." Mrs. Costello was a widow with a fortune; a person of much distinction, who frequently intimated that, if she were not so dreadfully liable to sick-headaches, she would probably have left a deeper impress upon her time. She had a long, pale face, a high nose, and a great deal of very striking white hair, which she wore in large puffs and *rouleaux* over the top of her head. She had two

sons married in New York, and another who was now in Europe. This young man was amusing himself at Hombourg; and, though he was on his travels, was rarely perceived to visit any particular city at the moment selected by his mother for her own appearance there. Her nephew, who had come up to Vevay expressly to see her, was therefore more attentive than those who, as she said, were nearer to her. He had imbibed at Geneva the idea that one must always be attentive to one's aunt. Mrs. Costello had not seen him for many years, and she was greatly pleased with him, manifesting her approbation by initiating him into many of the secrets of that social sway which, as she gave him to understand, she exerted in the American capital. She admitted that she was very exclusive; but, if he were acquainted with New York, he would see that one had to be. And her picture of the minutely hierarchical constitution of the society of that city, which she presented to him in many different lights, was, to Winterbourne's imagination, almost oppressively striking.

He immediately perceived, from her tone, that Miss Daisy Miller's place in the social scale was low. "I am afraid you don't approve of them," he said.

"They are very common," Mrs. Costello declared. "They are the sort of Americans that one does one's duty by not — not accepting."

"Ah, you don't accept them?" said the young man.

"I can't, my dear Frederick. I would if I could, but I can't."

"The young girl is very pretty," said Winterbourne, in a moment.

"Of course she's pretty. But she is very common."

"I see what you mean, of course," said Winterbourne, after another pause.

"She has that charming look that they all have," his aunt resumed. "I can't think where they pick it up; and she dresses in perfection — no, you don't know how well she dresses. I can't think where they get their taste."

"But, my dear aunt, she is not, after all, a Comanche savage."

"She is a young lady," said Mrs. Costello, "who has an intimacy with her mamma's courier."

"An intimacy with the courier," the young man demanded.

"Oh, the mother is just as bad! They treat the courier like a familiar friend — like a gentleman. I shouldn't wonder if he dines with them. Very likely they have never seen a man with such good manners, such fine clothes, so like a gentleman. He probably corresponds to the young lady's idea of a count. He sits with them in the garden in the evening. I think he smokes."

Winterbourne listened with interest to these disclosures; they helped him to make up his mind about Miss Daisy. Evidently she was rather wild.

"Well," he said, "I am not a courier, and yet she was very charming to me."

"You had better have said at first," said Mrs. Costello, with dignity, "that you had made her acquaintance."

"We simply met in the garden, and we talked a bit."

"*Tout bonnement!* And pray what did you say?"

"I said I should take the liberty of introducing her to my admirable aunt."

"I am much obliged to you."

"It was to guarantee my respectability," said Winterbourne.

"And pray who is to guarantee hers?"

"Ah, you are cruel," said the young man. "She's a very nice young girl."

"You don't say that as if you believed it," Mrs. Costello observed.

"She is completely uncultivated," Winterbourne went on. "But she is wonderfully pretty, and, in short, she is very nice. To prove that I believe it, I am going to take her to the Château de Chillon."

"You two are going off there together? I should say it proved just the contrary. How long had you known her, may I ask, when this interesting project was formed? You haven't been twenty-four hours in the house."

"I had known her half an hour!" said Winterbourne, smiling.

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Costello. "What a dreadful girl!"

Her nephew was silent for some moments. "You really think, then," he began, earnestly, and with a desire for trustworthy information — "you really think that —" But he paused again.

"Think what, sir?" said his aunt.

"That she is the sort of young lady who expects a man, sooner or later, to carry her off?"

"I haven't the least idea what such young ladies expect a man to do. But I really think that you had better not meddle with little American girls that are uncultivated, as you call them. You have lived too long out of the country. You will be sure to make some great mistake. You are too innocent."

"My dear aunt, I am not so innocent," said Winterbourne, smiling and curling his mustache.

"You are too guilty, then!"

Winterbourne continued to curl his mustache, meditatively. "You won't let the poor girl know you, then?" he asked at last.

"Is it literally true that she is going to the Château de Chillon with you?"

"I think that she fully intends it."

"Then, my dear Frederick," said Mrs. Costello, "I must decline the honor of her acquaintance. I am an old woman, but I am not too old, thank Heaven, to be shocked!"

"But don't they all do these things — the young girls in America?" Winterbourne inquired.

Mrs. Costello stared a moment. "I should like to see my granddaughters do them!" she declared, grimly.

This seemed to throw some light upon the matter, for Winterbourne remembered to have heard that his pretty cousins in New York were "tremendous flirts." If, therefore, Miss Daisy Miller exceeded the liberal margin allowed to these young ladies, it was probable that anything might be expected of her. Winterbourne was impatient to see her again, and he was vexed with himself that, by instinct, he should not appreciate her justly.

Though he was impatient to see her, he hardly knew what he should say to her about his aunt's refusal to become acquainted with her; but he discovered, promptly enough, that with Miss Daisy Miller there was no great need of walking on tiptoe. He found her that evening in the garden, wandering about in the warm starlight like an indolent sylph, and swinging to and fro the largest fan he had ever beheld. It was ten o'clock. He had dined with his aunt, had been sitting with her since dinner, and had just taken leave of her till the morrow. Miss Daisy Miller seemed very glad to see him; she declared it was the longest evening she had ever passed.

"Have you been all alone?" he asked.

"I have been walking round with mother. But mother gets tired walking round," she answered.

"Has she gone to bed?"

"No; she doesn't like to go to bed," said the young girl. "She doesn't sleep — not three hours. She says she doesn't know how she lives. She's dreadfully nervous. I guess she sleeps more than she thinks. She's gone somewhere after Randolph; she wants to try to get him to go to bed. He doesn't like to go to bed."

"Let us hope she will persuade him," observed Winterbourne.

"She will talk to him all she can; but he doesn't like her to talk to him," said Miss Daisy, opening her fan. "She's going to try to get Eugenio to talk to him. But he isn't afraid of Eugenio. Eugenio's a splendid courier, but he can't make much impression on Randolph! I don't believe he'll go to bed before eleven." It appeared that Randolph's vigil was in fact triumphantly prolonged, for Winterbourne strolled about with the young girl for some time without meeting her mother. "I have been looking round for that lady you want to introduce me to," his companion resumed. "She's your aunt." Then, on Winterbourne's admitting the fact, and expressing some curiosity as to how she had learned it, she said she had heard all about Mrs. Costello from the chambermaid. She was very quiet, and very *comme il faut;* she wore white puffs; she spoke to no one, and she never dined at the *table d'hôte*. Every two days she had a headache. "I think that's a lovely description, headache and all!" said Miss Daisy, chattering along in her thin, gay voice. "I want to know her ever so much. I know just what *your* aunt would be; I know I should like her. She would be very ex-

clusive. I like a lady to be exclusive; I'm dying to be exclusive myself. Well, we *are* exclusive, mother and I. We don't speak to every one — or they don't speak to us. I suppose it's about the same thing. Anyway, I shall be ever so glad to know your aunt."

Winterbourne was embarrassed. "She would be most happy," he said; "but I am afraid those headaches will interfere."

The young girl looked at him through the dusk. "But I suppose she doesn't have a headache every day," she said, sympathetically.

Winterbourne was silent a moment. "She tells me she does," he answered at last, not knowing what to say.

Miss Daisy Miller stopped, and stood looking at him. Her prettiness was still visible in the darkness; she was opening and closing her enormous fan. "She doesn't want to know me!" she said, suddenly. "Why don't you say so? You needn't be afraid. I'm not afraid!" And she gave a little laugh.

Winterbourne fancied there was a tremor in her voice; he was touched, shocked, mortified by it. "My dear young lady," he protested, "she knows no one. It's her wretched health."

The young girl walked on a few steps, laughing still. "You needn't be afraid," she repeated. "Why should she want to know me?" Then she paused again; she was close to the parapet of the garden, and in front of her was the starlit lake. There was a vague sheen upon its surface, and in the distance were dimly-seen mountain forms. Daisy Miller looked out upon the mysterious prospect, and then she gave another little laugh. "Gracious! she *is* exclusive!" she said. Winterbourne wondered whether she was seriously wounded, and for a moment almost wished that her sense of injury might be such as to make it becoming in him to attempt to reassure and comfort her. He had a pleasant sense that she would be very approachable for consolatory purposes. He felt then, for the instant, quite ready to sacrifice his aunt, conversationally; to admit that she was a proud, rude woman, and to declare that they needn't mind her. But before he had time to commit himself to this perilous mixture of gallantry and impiety, the young lady, resuming her walk, gave an exclamation in quite another tone. "Well, here's mother! I guess she hasn't got Randolph to go to bed." The figure of a lady appeared, at a distance, very indistinct in the darkness, and advancing with a slow and wavering movement. Suddenly it seemed to pause.

"Are you sure it is your mother? Can you distinguish her in this thick dusk?" Winterbourne asked.

"Well!" cried Miss Daisy Miller, with a laugh; "I guess I know my own mother. And when she has got on my shawl, too! She is always wearing my things."

The lady in question, ceasing to advance, hovered vaguely about the spot at which she had checked her steps.

"I am afraid your mother doesn't see you," said Winterbourne. "Or perhaps," he added, thinking, with Miss Miller, the joke permissible — "perhaps she feels guilty about your shawl."

"Oh, it's a fearful old thing!" the young girl replied, serenely. "I told her she could wear it. She won't come here, because she sees you."

"Ah, then," said Winterbourne, "I had better leave you."

"Oh no; come on!" urged Miss Daisy Miller.

"I'm afraid your mother doesn't approve of my walking with you."

Miss Miller gave him a serious glance. "It isn't for me, it's for you — that is, it's for *her*. Well, I don't know who it's for! But mother doesn't like any of my gentlemen friends. She's right down timid. She always makes a fuss if I introduce a gentleman. But I *do* introduce them — almost always. If I didn't introduce my gentlemen friends to mother," the young girl added, in her little soft, flat monotone, "I shouldn't think it was natural."

"To introduce me," said Winterbourne, "you must know my name." And he proceeded to pronounce it to her.

"Oh dear, I can't say all that!" said his companion, with a laugh. But by this time they had come up to Mrs. Miller, who, as they drew near, walked to the parapet of the garden and leaned upon it, looking intently at the lake, and turning her back to them. "Mother!" said the young girl, in a tone of decision. Upon this the elder lady turned round. "Mr. Winterbourne," said Miss Daisy Miller, introducing the young man very frankly and prettily. "Common," she was, as Mrs. Costello had pronounced her; yet it was a wonder to Winterbourne that, with her commonness, she had a singularly delicate grace.

Her mother was a small, spare, light person, with a wandering eye, a very exiguous nose, and a large forehead, decorated with a certain amount of thin, much-frizzled hair. Like her daughter, Mrs. Miller was dressed with extreme elegance; she had enormous diamonds in her ears. So far as Winterbourne could observe, she gave him no greeting — she certainly was not looking at him. Daisy was near her, pulling her shawl straight. "What are you doing, poking round here?" this young lady inquired, but by no means with that harshness of accent which her choice of words may imply.

"I don't know," said her mother, turning towards the lake again.

"I shouldn't think you'd want that shawl!" Daisy exclaimed.

"Well, I do!" her mother answered, with a little laugh.

"Did you get Randolph to go to bed?" asked the young girl.

"No; I couldn't induce him," said Mrs. Miller, very gently. "He wants to talk to the waiter. He likes to talk to that waiter."

"I was telling Mr. Winterbourne," the young girl went on; and to the young man's ear her tone might have indicated that she had been uttering his name all her life.

"Oh yes!" said Winterbourne; "I have the pleasure of knowing your son."

Randolph's mamma was silent; she turned her attention to the lake. But at last she spoke. "Well, I don't see how he lives!"

"Anyhow, it isn't so bad as it was at Dover," said Daisy Miller.

"And what occurred at Dover?" Winterbourne asked.

"He wouldn't go to bed at all. I guess he sat up all night in the public parlor. He wasn't in bed at twelve o'clock; I know that."

"It was half-past twelve," declared Mrs. Miller, with mild emphasis.

"Does he sleep much during the day?" Winterbourne demanded.

"I guess he doesn't sleep much," Daisy rejoined.

"I wish he would!" said her mother. "It seems as if he couldn't."

"I think he's real tiresome," Daisy pursued.

Then for some moments there was silence. "Well, Daisy Miller," said the elder lady, presently, "I shouldn't think you'd want to talk against your own brother!"

"Well, he *is* tiresome, mother," said Daisy, quite without the asperity of a retort.

"He's only nine," urged Mrs. Miller.

"Well, he wouldn't go to that castle," said the young girl. "I'm going there with Mr. Winterbourne."

To this announcement, very placidly made, Daisy's mamma offered no response. Winterbourne took for granted that she deeply disapproved of the projected excursion; but he said to himself that she was a simple, easily-managed person, and that a few deferential protestations would take the edge from her displeasure. "Yes," he began; "your daughter has kindly allowed me the honor of being her guide."

Mrs. Miller's wandering eyes attached themselves, with a sort of appealing air, to Daisy, who, however, strolled a few steps farther, gently humming to herself. "I presume you will go in the cars," said her mother.

"Yes, or in the boat," said Winterbourne.

"Well, of course, I don't know," Mrs. Miller rejoined. "I have never been to that castle."

"It is a pity you shouldn't go," said Winterbourne, beginning to feel reassured as to her opposition. And yet he was quite prepared to find that, as a matter of course, she meant to accompany her daughter.

"We've been thinking ever so much about going," she pursued; "but it seems as if we couldn't. Of course Daisy, she wants to go round. But there's a lady here — I don't know her name — she says she shouldn't think we'd want to go see castles *here;* she should think we'd want to wait till we got to Italy. It seems as if there would be so many there," continued Mrs. Miller, with an air of increasing confidence. "Of course we only want to see the principal ones. We visited several in England," she presently added.

"Ah, yes! in England there are beautiful castles," said Winterbourne. "But Chillon, here, is very well worth seeing."

"Well, if Daisy feels up to it — " said Mrs. Miller, in a tone impregnated with a sense of the magnitude of the enterprise. "It seems as if there was nothing she wouldn't undertake."

"Oh, I think she'll enjoy it!" Winterbourne declared. And he desired more and more to make it a certainty that he was to have the privilege of a tête-à-tête with the young lady, who was strolling along in front of them, softly vocalizing. "You are not disposed, madam," he inquired, "to undertake it yourself?"

Daisy's mother looked at him an instant askance, and then walked forward in silence. Then — "I guess she had better go alone," she said, simply. Winterbourne observed to himself that this was a very different type of maternity from that of the vigilant matrons who massed themselves in the fore-front of social intercourse in the dark old city at the other end of the lake. But his meditations were interrupted by hearing his name very distinctly pronounced by Mrs. Miller's unprotected daughter.

"Mr. Winterbourne!" murmured Daisy.

"Mademoiselle!" said the young man.

"Don't you want to take me out in a boat?"

"At present!" he asked.

"Of course!" said Daisy.

"Well, Annie Miller!" exclaimed her mother.

"I beg you, madam, to let her go," said Winterbourne, ardently; for he had never yet enjoyed the sensation of guiding through the summer starlight a skiff freighted with a fresh and beautiful young girl.

"I shouldn't think she'd want to," said her mother. "I should think she'd rather go indoors."

"I'm sure Mr. Winterbourne wants to take me," Daisy declared. "He's so awfully devoted!"

"I will row you over to Chillon in the starlight."

"I don't believe it!" said Daisy.

"Well!" ejaculated the elder lady again.

"You haven't spoken to me for half an hour," her daughter went on.

"I have been having some very pleasant conversation with your mother," said Winterbourne.

"Well, I want you to take me out in a boat!" Daisy repeated. They had all stopped, and she had turned round and was looking at Winterbourne. Her face wore a charming smile, her pretty eyes were gleaming, she was swinging her great fan about. No; it's impossible to be prettier than that, thought Winterbourne.

"There are half a dozen boats moored at that landing-place," he said, pointing to certain steps which descended from the garden to the lake.

"If you will do me the honor to accept my arm, we will go and select one of them."

Daisy stood there smiling; she threw back her head and gave a little light laugh. "I like a gentleman to be formal!" she declared.

"I assure you it's a formal offer."

"I was bound I would make you say something," Daisy went on.

"You see, it's not very difficult," said Winterbourne. "But I am afraid you are chaffing me."

"I think not, sir," remarked Mrs. Miller, very gently.

"Do, then, let me give you a row," he said to the young girl.

"It's quite lovely, the way you say that!" cried Daisy.

"It will be still more lovely to do it."

"Yes, it would be lovely!" said Daisy. But she made no movement to accompany him; she only stood there laughing.

"I should think you had better find out what time it is," interposed her mother.

"It is eleven o'clock, madam," said a voice, with a foreign accent, out of the neighboring darkness; and Winterbourne, turning, perceived the florid personage who was in attendance upon the two ladies. He had apparently just approached.

"Oh, Eugenio," said Daisy, "I am going out in a boat!"

Eugenio bowed. "At eleven o'clock, mademoiselle?"

"I am going with Mr. Winterbourne — this very minute."

"Do tell her she can't," said Mrs. Miller to the courier.

"I think you had better not go out in a boat, mademoiselle," Eugenio declared.

Winterbourne wished to Heaven this pretty girl were not so familiar with her courier; but he said nothing.

"I suppose you don't think it's proper!" Daisy exclaimed. "Eugenio doesn't think anything's proper."

"I am at your service," said Winterbourne.

"Does mademoiselle propose to go alone?" asked Eugenio of Mrs. Miller.

"Oh, no; with this gentleman!" answered Daisy's mamma.

The courier looked for a moment at Winterbourne — the latter thought he was smiling — and then, solemnly, with a bow, "As mademoiselle pleases!" he said.

"Oh, I hoped you would make a fuss!" said Daisy. "I don't care to go now."

"I myself shall make a fuss if you don't go," said Winterbourne.

"That's all I want — a little fuss!" And the young girl began to laugh again.

"Mr. Randolph has gone to bed!" the courier announced, frigidly.

"Oh, Daisy; now we can go!" said Mrs. Miller.

Daisy turned away from Winterbourne, looking at him, smiling, and fanning herself. " Good-night," she said; " I hope you are disappointed, or disgusted, or something! "

He looked at her, taking the hand she offered him. " I am puzzled," he answered.

" Well, I hope it won't keep you awake! " she said, very smartly; and, under the escort of the privileged Eugenio, the two ladies passed towards the house.

Winterbourne stood looking after them; he was indeed puzzled. He lingered beside the lake for a quarter of an hour, turning over the mystery of the young girl's sudden familiarities and caprices. But the only very definite conclusion he came to was that he should enjoy deucedly " going off " with her somewhere.

Two days afterwards he went off with her to the Castle of Chillon. He waited for her in the large hall of the hotel, where the couriers, the servants, the foreign tourists, were lounging about and staring. It was not the place he should have chosen, but she had appointed it. She came tripping her pretty figure, dressed in the perfection of a soberly elegant travelling costume. Winterbourne was a man of imagination and, as our ancestors used to say, sensibility; as he looked at her dress and — on the great staircase — her little rapid, confiding step, he felt as if there were something romantic going forward. He could have believed he was going to elope with her. He passed out with her among all the idle people that were assembled there; they were all looking at her very hard; she had begun to chatter as soon as she joined him. Winterbourne's preference had been that they should be conveyed to Chillon in a carriage; but she expressed a lively wish to go in the little steamer; she declared that she had a passion for steamboats. There was always such a lovely breeze upon the water, and you saw such lots of people. The sail was not long, but Winterbourne's companion found time to say a great many things. To the young man himself their little excursion was so much of an escapade — an adventure — that, even allowing for her habitual sense of freedom, he had some expectation of seeing her regard it in the same way. But it must be confessed that, in this particular, he was disappointed. Daisy Miller was extremely animated, she was in charming spirits; but she was apparently not at all excited; she was not fluttered; she avoided neither his eyes nor those of any one else; she blushed neither when she looked at him nor when she felt that people were looking at her. People continued to look at her a great deal, and Winterbourne took much satisfaction in his pretty companion's distinguished air. He had been a little afraid that she would talk loud, laugh overmuch, and even, perhaps, desire to move about the boat a good deal. But he quite forgot his fears; he sat smiling, with his eyes upon her face, while, without moving from her place, she delivered herself of a great number of original reflections. It was the most charming garrulity he had ever

heard. He had assented to the idea that she was "common"; but was she so, after all, or was he simply getting used to her commonness? Her conversation was chiefly of what metaphysicians term the objective cast; but every now and then it took a subjective turn.

"What on *earth* are you so grave about?" she suddenly demanded, fixing her agreeable eyes upon Winterbourne's.

"Am I grave?" he asked. "I had an idea I was grinning from ear to ear."

"You look as if you were taking me to a funeral. If that's a grin, your ears are very near together."

"Should you like me to dance a hornpipe on the deck?"

"Pray do, and I'll carry round your hat. It will pay the expenses of our journey."

"I never was better pleased in my life," murmured Winterbourne.

She looked at him a moment, and then burst into a little laugh. "I like to make you say those things! You're a queer mixture!"

In the castle, after they had landed, the subjective element decidedly prevailed. Daisy tripped about the vaulted chambers, rustled her skirts in the corkscrew staircases, flirted back with a pretty little cry and a shudder from the edge of the *oubliettes,* and turned a singularly well-shaped ear to everything that Winterbourne told her about the place. But he saw that she cared very little for feudal antiquities, and that the dusky traditions of Chillon made but a slight impression upon her. They had the good fortune to have been able to walk about without other companionship than that of the custodian; and Winterbourne arranged with this functionary that they should not be hurried — that they should linger and pause wherever they chose. The custodian interpreted the bargain generously — Winterbourne, on his side, had been generous — and ended by leaving them quite to themselves. Miss Miller's observations were not remarkable for logical consistency; for anything she wanted to say she was sure to find a pretext. She found a great many pretexts in the rugged embrasures of Chillon for asking Winterbourne sudden questions about himself — his family, his previous history, his tastes, his habits, his intentions — and for supplying information upon corresponding points in her own personality. Of her own tastes, habits, and intentions Miss Miller was prepared to give the most definite, and, indeed, the most favorable account.

"Well, I hope you know enough!" she said to her companion, after he had told her the history of the unhappy Bonnivard. "I never saw a man that knew so much!" The history of Bonnivard had evidently, as they say, gone into one ear and out of the other. But Daisy went on to say that she wished Winterbourne would travel with them, and "go round" with them; they might know something, in that case. "Don't you want to come and teach Randolph?" she asked. Winterbourne said that nothing could pos-

sibly please him so much, but that he had unfortunately other occupations. "Other occupations? I don't believe it!" said Miss Daisy. "What do you mean? You are not in business." The young man admitted that he was not in business; but he had engagements which, even within a day or two, would force him to go back to Geneva. "Oh, bother!" she said; "I don't believe it!" and she began to talk about something else. But a few moments later, when he was pointing out to her the pretty design of an antique fireplace, she broke out irrelevantly, "You don't mean to say you are going back to Geneva?"

"It is a melancholy fact that I shall have to return to-morrow."

"Well, Mr. Winterbourne," said Daisy, "I think you're horrid!"

"Oh, don't say such dreadful things!" said Winterbourne — "just at the last!"

"The last!" cried the young girl; "I call it the first. I have half a mind to leave you here and go straight back to the hotel alone." And for the next ten minutes she did nothing but call him horrid. Poor Winterbourne was fairly bewildered; no young lady had as yet done him the honor to be so agitated by the announcement of his movements. His companion, after this, ceased to pay any attention to the curiosities of Chillon or the beauties of the lake; she opened fire upon the mysterious charmer of Geneva, whom she appeared to have instantly taken it for granted that he was hurrying back to see. How did Miss Daisy Miller know that there was a charmer in Geneva? Winterbourne, who denied the existence of such a person, was quite unable to discover; and he was divided between amazement at the rapidity of her induction and amusement at the frankness of her *persiflage*. She seemed to him, in all this, an extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity. "Does she never allow you more than three days at a time?" asked Daisy, ironically. "Doesn't she give you a vacation in summer? There is no one so hard worked but they can get leave to go off somewhere at this season. I suppose, if you stay another day, she'll come after you in the boat. Do wait over till Friday, and I will go down to the landing to see her arrive!" Winterbourne began to think he had been wrong to feel disappointed in the temper in which the young lady had embarked. If he had missed the personal accent, the personal accent was now making its appearance. It sounded very distinctly, at last, in her telling him she would stop "teasing" him if he would promise her solemnly to come down to Rome in the winter.

"That's not a difficult promise to make," said Winterbourne. "My aunt has taken an apartment in Rome for the winter, and has already asked me to come and see her."

"I don't want you to come for your aunt," said Daisy; "I want you to come for me." And this was the only allusion that the young man was ever to hear her make to his invidious kinswoman. He declared that, at any rate,

he would certainly come. After this Daisy stopped teasing. Winterbourne took a carriage, and they drove back to Vevay in the dusk. The young girl was very quiet.

In the evening Winterbourne mentioned to Mrs. Costello that he had spent the afternoon at Chillon with Miss Daisy Miller.

"The Americans — of the courier?" asked this lady.

"Ah, happily," said Winterbourne, "the courier stayed at home."

"She went with you all alone?"

"All alone."

Mrs. Costello sniffed a little at her smelling-bottle. "And that," she exclaimed, "is the young person whom you wanted me to know!"

Part II

Winterbourne, who had returned to Geneva the day after his excursion to Chillon, went to Rome towards the end of January. His aunt had been established there for several weeks, and he had received a couple of letters from her. "Those people you were so devoted to last summer at Vevay have turned up here, courier and all," she wrote. "They seem to have made several acquaintances, but the courier continues to be the most *intime*. The young lady, however, is also very intimate with some third-rate Italians, with whom she rackets about in a way that makes much talk. Bring me that pretty novel of Cherbuliez's — *Paule Méré* — and don't come later than the 23d."

In the natural course of events, Winterbourne, on arriving in Rome, would presently have ascertained Mrs. Miller's address at the American banker's, and have gone to pay his compliments to Miss Daisy. "After what happened at Vevay, I think I may certainly call upon them," he said to Mrs. Costello.

"If, after what happens — at Vevay and everywhere — you desire to keep up the acquaintance, you are very welcome. Of course a man may know every one. Men are welcome to the privilege!"

"Pray what is it that happens — here, for instance?" Winterbourne demanded.

"The girl goes about alone with her foreigners. As to what happens further, you must apply elsewhere for information. She has picked up half a dozen of the regular Roman fortune-hunters, and she takes them about to people's houses. When she comes to a party she brings with her a gentleman with a good deal of manner and a wonderful mustache."

"And where is the mother?"

"I haven't the least idea. They are very dreadful people."

Winterbourne meditated a moment. "They are very ignorant — very innocent only. Depend upon it they are not bad."

"They are hopelessly vulgar," said Mrs. Costello. "Whether or no being

hopelessly vulgar is being 'bad' is a question for the metaphysicians. They are bad enough to dislike, at any rate; and for this short life that is quite enough."

The news that Daisy Miller was surrounded by half a dozen wonderful mustaches checked Winterbourne's impulse to go straightway to see her. He had, perhaps, not definitely flattered himself that he had made an ineffaceable impression upon her heart, but he was annoyed at hearing of a state of affairs so little in harmony with an image that had lately flitted in and out of his own meditations; the image of a very pretty girl looking out of an old Roman window and asking herself urgently when Mr. Winterbourne would arrive. If, however, he determined to wait a little before reminding Miss Miller of his claims to her consideration, he went very soon to call upon two or three other friends. One of these friends was an American lady who had spent several winters at Geneva, where she had placed her children at school. She was a very accomplished woman, and she lived in the Via Gregoriana. Winterbourne found her in a little crimson drawing-room on a third floor; the room was filled with southern sunshine. He had not been there ten minutes when the servant came in, announcing "Madame Mila!" This announcement was presently followed by the entrance of little Randolph Miller, who stopped in the middle of the room and stood staring at Winterbourne. An instant later his pretty sister crossed the threshold; and then, after a considerable interval, Mrs. Miller slowly advanced.

"I know you!" said Randolph.

"I'm sure you know a great many things," exclaimed Winterbourne, taking him by the hand. "How is your education coming on?"

Daisy was exchanging greetings very prettily with her hostess; but when she heard Winterbourne's voice she quickly turned her head. "Well, I declare!" she said.

"I told you I should come, you know," Winterbourne rejoined, smiling.

"Well, I didn't believe it," said Miss Daisy.

"I am much obliged to you," laughed the young man.

"You might have come to see me!" said Daisy.

"I arrived only yesterday."

"I don't believe that!" the young girl declared.

Winterbourne turned with a protesting smile to her mother; but this lady evaded his glance, and, seating herself, fixed her eyes upon her son. "We've got a bigger place than this," said Randolph. "It's all gold on the walls."

Mrs. Miller turned uneasily in her chair. "I told you if I were to bring you, you would say something!" she murmured.

"I told *you!*" Randolph exclaimed. "I tell *you,* sir!" he added, jocosely, giving Winterbourne a thump on the knee. "It *is* bigger, too!"

Daisy had entered upon a lively conversation with her hostess, and

Winterbourne judged it becoming to address a few words to her mother. "I hope you have been well since we parted at Vevay," he said.

Mrs. Miller now certainly looked at him — at his chin. "Not very well, sir," she answered.

"She's got the dyspepsia," said Randolph. "I've got it, too. Father's got it. I've got it most!"

This announcement, instead of embarrassing Mrs. Miller, seemed to relieve her. "I suffer from the liver," she said. "I think it's this climate; it's less bracing than Schenectady, especially in the winter season. I don't know whether you know we reside at Schenectady. I was saying to Daisy that I certainly hadn't found any one like Dr. Davis, and I didn't believe I should. Oh, at Schenectady he stands first; they think everything of him. He has so much to do, and yet there was nothing he wouldn't do for me. He said he never saw anything like my dyspepsia, but he was bound to cure it. I'm sure there was nothing he wouldn't try. He was just going to try something new when we came off. Mr. Miller wanted Daisy to see Europe for herself. But I wrote to Mr. Miller that it seems as if I couldn't get on without Dr. Davis. At Schenectady he stands at the very top; and there's a great deal of sickness there, too. It affects my sleep."

Winterbourne had a good deal of pathological gossip with Dr. Davis's patient, during which Daisy chattered unremittingly to her own companion. The young man asked Mrs. Miller how she was pleased with Rome. "Well, I must say I am disappointed," she answered. "We had heard so much about it; I suppose we had heard too much. But we couldn't help that. We had been led to expect something different."

"Ah, wait a little, and you will become very fond of it," said Winterbourne.

"I hate it worse and worse every day!" cried Randolph.

"You are like the infant Hannibal," said Winterbourne.

"No, I ain't!" Randolph declared, at a venture.

"You are not much like an infant," said his mother. "But we have seen places," she resumed, "that I should put a long way before Rome." And in reply to Winterbourne's interrogation, "There's Zürich," she concluded, "I think Zürich is lovely; and we hadn't heard half so much about it."

"The best place we've seen is the City of Richmond!" said Randolph.

"He means the ship," his mother explained. "We crossed in that ship. Randolph had a good time on the *City of Richmond*."

"It's the best place I've seen," the child repeated. "Only it was turned the wrong way."

"Well, we've got to turn the right way some time," said Mrs. Miller, with a little laugh. Winterbourne expressed the hope that her daughter at least found some gratification in Rome, and she declared that Daisy was quite carried away. "It's on account of the society — the society's splendid. She goes round everywhere; she has made a great number of acquaint-

ances. Of course she goes round more than I do. I must say they have been very sociable; they have taken her right in. And then she knows a great many gentlemen. Oh, she thinks there's nothing like Rome. Of course, it's a great deal pleasanter for a young lady if she knows plenty of gentlemen."

By this time Daisy had turned her attention again to Winterbourne. "I've been telling Mrs. Walker how mean you were!" the young girl announced.

"And what is the evidence you have offered?" asked Winterbourne, rather annoyed at Miss Miller's want of appreciation of the zeal of an admirer who on his way down to Rome had stopped neither at Bologna nor at Florence, simply because of a certain sentimental impatience. He remembered that a cynical compatriot had once told him that American women — the pretty ones, and this gave a largeness to the axiom — were at once the most exacting in the world and the least endowed with a sense of indebtedness.

"Why, you were awfully mean at Vevay," said Daisy. "You wouldn't do anything. You wouldn't stay there when I asked you."

"My dearest young lady," cried Winterbourne, with eloquence, "have I come all the way to Rome to encounter your reproaches?"

"Just hear him say that!" said Daisy to her hostess, giving a twist to a bow on this lady's dress. "Did you ever hear anything so quaint?"

"So quaint, my dear?" murmured Mrs. Walker, in the tone of a partisan of Winterbourne.

"Well, I don't know," said Daisy, fingering Mrs. Walker's ribbons. "Mrs. Walker, I want to tell you something."

"Mother-r," interposed Randolph, with his rough ends to his words, "I tell you you've got to go. Eugenio 'll raise — something!"

"I'm not afraid of Eugenio," said Daisy, with a toss of her head. "Look here, Mrs. Walker," she went on, "you know I'm coming to your party."

"I am delighted to hear it."

"I've got a lovely dress!"

"I am very sure of that."

"But I want to ask a favor — permission to bring a friend."

"I shall be happy to see any of your friends," said Mrs. Walker, turning with a smile to Mrs. Miller.

"Oh, they are not my friends," answered Daisy's mamma, smiling shyly, in her own fashion. "I never spoke to them."

"It's an intimate friend of mine — Mr. Giovanelli," said Daisy, without a tremor in her clear little voice, or a shadow on her brilliant little face.

Mrs. Walker was silent a moment; she gave a rapid glance at Winterbourne. "I shall be glad to see Mr. Giovanelli," she then said.

"He's an Italian," Daisy pursued, with the prettiest serenity. "He's a great friend of mine; he's the handsomest man in the world — except Mr. Winterbourne! He knows plenty of Italians, but he wants to know some

Americans. He thinks ever so much of Americans. He's tremendously clever. He's perfectly lovely! "

It was settled that this brilliant personage should be brought to Mrs. Walker's party, and then Mrs. Miller prepared to take her leave. " I guess we'll go back to the hotel," she said.

" You may go back to the hotel, mother, but I'm going to take a walk," said Daisy.

" She's going to walk with Mr. Giovanelli," Randolph proclaimed.

" I am going to the Pincio," said Daisy, smiling.

" Alone, my dear — at this hour? " Mrs. Walker asked. The afternoon was drawing to a close — it was the hour for the throng of carriages and of contemplative pedestrians. " I don't think it's safe, my dear," said Mrs. Walker.

" Neither do I," subjoined Mrs. Miller. " You'll get the fever, as sure as you live. Remember what Dr. Davis told you! "

" Give her some medicine before she goes," said Randolph.

The company had risen to its feet; Daisy, still showing her pretty teeth, bent over and kissed her hostess. " Mrs. Walker, you are too perfect," she said. " I'm not going alone; I am going to meet a friend."

" Your friend won't keep you from getting the fever," Mrs. Miller observed.

" Is it Mr. Giovanelli? " asked the hostess.

Winterbourne was watching the young girl; at this question his attention quickened. She stood there smiling and smoothing her bonnet ribbons; she glanced at Winterbourne. Then, while she glanced and smiled, she answered, without a shade of hesitation, " Mr. Giovanelli — the beautiful Giovanelli."

" My dear young friend," said Mrs. Walker, taking her hand, pleadingly, " don't walk off to the Pincio at this unhealthy hour to meet a beautiful Italian."

" Well, he speaks English," said Mrs. Miller.

" Gracious me! " Daisy exclaimed, " I don't want to do anything improper. There's an easy way to settle it." She continued to glance at Winterbourne. " The Pincio is only a hundred yards distant; and if Mr. Winterbourne were as polite as he pretends, he would offer to walk with me! "

Winterbourne's politeness hastened to affirm itself, and the young girl gave him gracious leave to accompany her. They passed down-stairs before her mother, and at the door Winterbourne perceived Mrs. Miller's carriage drawn up, with the ornamental courier, whose acquaintance he had made at Vevay, seated within. " Good-bye, Eugenio! " cried Daisy; " I'm going to take a walk." The distance from the Via Gregoriana to the beautiful garden at the other end of the Pincian Hill is, in fact, rapidly traversed. As the day was splendid, however, and the concourse of vehicles, walkers,

and loungers numerous, the young Americans found their progress much delayed. This fact was highly agreeable to Winterbourne, in spite of his consciousness of his singular situation. The slow-moving, idly-gazing Roman crowd bestowed much attention upon the extremely pretty young foreign lady who was passing through it upon his arm; and he wondered what on earth had been in Daisy's mind when she proposed to expose herself, unattended, to its appreciation. His own mission, to her sense, apparently, was to consign her to the hands of Mr. Giovanelli; but Winterbourne, at once annoyed and gratified, resolved that he would do no such thing.

"Why haven't you been to see me?" asked Daisy. "You can't get out of that."

"I have had the honor of telling you that I have only just stepped out of the train."

"You must have stayed in the train a good while after it stopped!" cried the young girl, with her little laugh. "I suppose you were asleep. You have had time to go to see Mrs. Walker."

"I knew Mrs. Walker —" Winterbourne began to explain.

"I know where you knew her. You knew her at Geneva. She told me so. Well, you knew me at Vevay. That's just as good. So you ought to have come." She asked him no other question than this; she began to prattle about her own affairs. "We've got splendid rooms at the hotel; Eugenio says they're the best rooms in Rome. We are going to stay all winter, if we don't die of the fever; and I guess we'll stay then. It's a great deal nicer than I thought; I thought it would be fearfully quiet; I was sure it would be awfully poky. I was sure we should be going round all the time with one of those dreadful old men that explain about the pictures and things. But we only had about a week of that, and now I'm enjoying myself. I know ever so many people, and they are all so charming. The society's extremely select. There are all kinds — English and Germans and Italians. I think I like the English best. I like their style of conversation. But there are some lovely Americans. I never saw anything so hospitable. There's something or other every day. There's not much dancing; but I must say I never thought dancing was everything. I was always fond of conversation. I guess I shall have plenty at Mrs. Walker's, her rooms are so small." When they had passed the gate of the Pincian Gardens, Miss Miller began to wonder where Mr. Giovanelli might be. "We had better go straight to that place in front," she said, "where you look at the view."

"I certainly shall not help you to find him," Winterbourne declared.

"Then I shall find him without you," said Miss Daisy.

"You certainly won't leave me!" cried Winterbourne.

She burst into her little laugh. "Are you afraid you'll get lost — or run over? But there's Giovanelli, leaning against that tree. He's staring at the women in the carriages; did you ever see anything so cool?"

Winterbourne perceived at some distance a little man standing with folded arms nursing his cane. He had a handsome face, an artfully poised hat, a glass in one eye, and a nosegay in his buttonhole. Winterbourne looked at him a moment, and then said, " Do you mean to speak to that man? "

" Do I mean to speak to him? Why, you don't suppose I mean to communicate by signs? "

" Pray understand, then," said Winterbourne, " that I intend to remain with you."

Daisy stopped and looked at him, without a sign of troubled consciousness in her face; with nothing but the presence of her charming eyes and her happy dimples. " Well, she's a cool one! " thought the young man.

" I don't like the way you say that," said Daisy. " It's too imperious."

" I beg your pardon if I say it wrong. The main point is to give you an idea of my meaning."

The young girl looked at him more gravely, but with eyes that were prettier than ever. " I have never allowed a gentleman to dictate to me, or to interfere with anything I do."

" I think you have made a mistake," said Winterbourne. " You should sometimes listen to a gentleman — the right one."

Daisy began to laugh again. " I do nothing but listen to gentlemen! " she exclaimed. " Tell me if Mr. Giovanelli is the right one."

The gentleman with the nosegay in his bosom had now perceived our two friends, and was approaching the young girl with obsequious rapidity. He bowed to Winterbourne as well as to the latter's companion; he had a brilliant smile, an intelligent eye; Winterbourne thought him not a bad-looking fellow. But he nevertheless said to Daisy, " No, he's not the right one."

Daisy evidently had a natural talent for performing introductions; she mentioned the name of each of her companions to the other. She strolled along with one of them on each side of her; Mr. Giovanelli, who spoke English very cleverly — Winterbourne afterwards learned that he had practised the idiom upon a great many American heiresses — addressed to her a great deal of very polite nonsense; he was extremely urbane, and the young American, who said nothing, reflected upon that profundity of Italian cleverness which enables people to appear more gracious in proportion as they are more acutely disappointed. Giovanelli, of course, had counted upon something more intimate; he had not bargained for a party of three. But he kept his temper in a manner which suggested far-stretching intentions. Winterbourne flattered himself that he had taken his measure. " He is not a gentleman," said the young American; " he is only a clever imitation of one. He is a music-master, or a penny-a-liner, or a third-rate artist. D—n his good looks! " Mr. Giovanelli had certainly a very pretty face; but Winterbourne felt a superior indignation at his own lovely

fellow-country-woman's not knowing the difference between a spurious gentleman and a real one. Giovanelli chattered and jested, and made himself wonderfully agreeable. It was true that, if he was an imitation, the imitation was brilliant. "Nevertheless," Winterbourne said to himself, "a nice girl ought to know!" And then he came back to the question whether this was, in fact, a nice girl. Would a nice girl, even allowing for her being a little American flirt, make a rendezvous with a presumably low-lived foreigner? The rendezvous in this case, indeed, had been in broad daylight, and in the most crowded corner of Rome; but was it not impossible to regard the choice of these circumstances as a proof of extreme cynicism? Singular though it may seem, Winterbourne was vexed that the young girl, in joining her *amoroso,* should not appear more impatient of his own company, and he was vexed because of his inclination. It was impossible to regard her as a perfectly well-conducted young lady; she was wanting in a certain indispensable delicacy. It would therefore simplify matters greatly to be able to treat her as the object of one of those sentiments which are called by romancers "lawless passions." That she should seem to wish to get rid of him would help him to think more lightly of her, and to be able to think more lightly of her would make her much less perplexing. But Daisy, on this occasion, continued to present herself as an inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence.

She had been walking some quarter of an hour, attended by her two cavaliers, and responding in a tone of very childish gayety, as it seemed to Winterbourne, to the pretty speeches of Mr. Giovanelli, when a carriage that had detached itself from the revolving train drew up beside the path. At the same moment Winterbourne perceived that his friend Mrs. Walker — the lady whose house he had lately left — was seated in the vehicle, and was beckoning to him. Leaving Miss Miller's side, he hastened to obey her summons. Mrs. Walker was flushed; she wore an excited air. "It is really too dreadful," she said. "That girl must not do this sort of thing. She must not walk here with you two men. Fifty people have noticed her."

Winterbourne raised his eyebrows. "I think it's a pity to make too much fuss about it."

"It's a pity to let the girl ruin herself!"

"She is very innocent," said Winterbourne.

"She's very crazy!" cried Mrs. Walker. "Did you ever see anything so imbecile as her mother? After you had all left me just now I could not sit still for thinking of it. It seemed too pitiful not even to attempt to save her. I ordered the carriage and put on my bonnet, and came here as quickly as possible. Thank Heaven I have found you!"

"What do you propose to do with us?" asked Winterbourne, smiling.

"To ask her to get in, to drive her about here for half an hour, so that the world may see that she is not running absolutely wild, and then to take her safely home."

"I don't think it's a very happy thought," said Winterbourne; "but you can try."

Mrs. Walker tried. The young man went in pursuit of Miss Miller, who had simply nodded and smiled at his interlocutor in the carriage, and had gone her way with her companion. Daisy, on learning that Mrs. Walker wished to speak to her, retraced her steps with a perfect good grace and with Mr. Giovanelli at her side. She declared that she was delighted to have a chance to present this gentleman to Mrs. Walker. She immediately achieved the introduction, and declared that she had never in her life seen anything so lovely as Mrs. Walker's carriage-rug.

"I am glad you admire it," said this lady, smiling sweetly. "Will you get in and let me put it over you?"

"Oh no, thank you," said Daisy. "I shall admire it much more as I see you driving round with it."

"Do get in and drive with me!" said Mrs. Walker.

"That would be charming, but it's so enchanting just as I am!" and Daisy gave a brilliant glance at the gentlemen on either side of her.

"It may be enchanting, dear child, but it is not the custom here," urged Mrs. Walker, leaning forward in her victoria, with her hands devoutly clasped.

"Well, it ought to be, then!" said Daisy. "If I didn't walk I should expire."

"You should walk with your mother, dear," cried the lady from Geneva, losing patience.

"With my mother, dear!" exclaimed the young girl. Winterbourne saw that she scented interference. "My mother never walked ten steps in her life. And then, you know," she added, with a laugh, "I am more than five years old."

"You are old enough to be more reasonable. You are old enough, dear Miss Miller, to be talked about."

Daisy looked at Mrs. Walker, smiling intensely. "Talked about? What do you mean?"

"Come into my carriage, and I will tell you."

Daisy turned her quickened glance again from one of the gentlemen beside her to the other. Mr. Giovanelli was bowing to and fro, rubbing down his gloves and laughing very agreeably; Winterbourne thought it a most unpleasant scene. "I don't think I want to know what you mean," said Daisy, presently. "I don't think I should like it."

Winterbourne wished that Mrs. Walker would tuck in her carriage-rug and drive away; but this lady did not enjoy being defied, as she afterwards told him. "Should you prefer being thought a very reckless girl?" she demanded.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Daisy. She looked again at Mr. Giovanelli, then she turned to Winterbourne. There was a little pink flush in her cheek; she

was tremendously pretty. "Does Mr. Winterbourne think," she asked slowly, smiling, throwing back her head and glancing at him from head to foot, "that, to save my reputation, I ought to get into the carriage?"

Winterbourne colored; for an instant he hesitated greatly. It seemed so strange to hear her speak that way of her "reputation." But he himself, in fact, must speak in accordance with gallantry. The finest gallantry here was simply to tell her the truth, and the truth for Winterbourne — as the few indications I have been able to give have made him known to the reader — was that Daisy Miller should take Mrs. Walker's advice. He looked at her exquisite prettiness, and then said, very gently, "I think you should get into the carriage."

Daisy gave a violent laugh. "I never heard anything so stiff! If this is improper, Mrs. Walker," she pursued, "then I am all improper, and you must give me up. Good-bye; I hope you'll have a lovely ride!" and, with Mr. Giovanelli, who made a triumphantly obsequious salute, she turned away.

Mrs. Walker sat looking after her, and there were tears in Mrs. Walker's eyes. "Get in here, sir," she said to Winterbourne, indicating the place beside her. The young man answered that he felt bound to accompany Miss Miller; whereupon Mrs. Walker declared that if he refused her this favor she would never speak to him again. She was evidently in earnest. Winterbourne overtook Daisy and her companion, and, offering the young girl his hand, told her that Mrs. Walker had made an imperious claim upon his society. He expected that in answer she would say something rather free, something to commit herself still further to that "recklessness" from which Mrs. Walker had so charitably endeavored to dissuade her. But she only shook his hand, hardly looking at him; while Mr. Giovanelli bade him farewell with a too emphatic flourish of the hat.

Winterbourne was not in the best possible humor as he took his seat in Mrs. Walker's victoria. "That was not clever of you," he said, candidly, while the vehicle mingled again with the throng of carriages.

"In such a case," his companion answered, "I don't wish to be clever; I wish to be *earnest!*"

"Well, your earnestness has only offended her and put her off."

"It has happened very well," said Mrs. Walker. "If she is so perfectly determined to compromise herself, the sooner one knows it the better; one can act accordingly."

"I suspect she meant no harm," Winterbourne rejoined.

"So I thought a month ago. But she has been going too far."

"What has she been doing?"

"Everything that is not done here. Flirting with any man she could pick up; sitting in corners with mysterious Italians; dancing all the evening with the same partners; receiving visits at eleven o'clock at night. Her mother goes away when visitors come."

" But her brother," said Winterbourne, laughing, " sits up till midnight."

" He must be edified by what he sees. I'm told that at their hotel every one is talking about her, and that a smile goes round among all the servants when a gentleman comes and asks for Miss Miller."

" The servants be hanged! " said Winterbourne, angrily. " The poor girl's only fault," he presently added, " is that she is very uncultivated."

" She is naturally indelicate," Mrs. Walker declared. " Take that example this morning. How long had you known her at Vevay? "

" A couple of days."

" Fancy, then, her making it a personal matter that you should have left the place! "

Winterbourne was silent for some moments; then he said, " I suspect, Mrs. Walker, that you and I have lived too long at Geneva! " And he added a request that she should inform him with what particular design she had made him enter her carriage.

" I wished to beg you to cease your relations with Miss Miller — not to flirt with her — to give her no further opportunity to expose herself — to let her alone, in short."

" I'm afraid I can't do that," said Winterbourne. " I like her extremely."

" All the more reason that you shouldn't help her to make a scandal."

" There shall be nothing scandalous in my attentions to her."

" There certainly will be in the way she takes them. But I have said what I had on my conscience," Mrs. Walker pursued. " If you wish to rejoin the young lady I will put you down. Here, by-the-way, you have a chance."

The carriage was traversing that part of the Pincian Garden that overhangs the wall of Rome and overlooks the beautiful Villa Borghese. It is bordered by a large parapet, near which there are several seats. One of the seats at a distance was occupied by a gentleman and a lady, towards whom Mrs. Walker gave a toss of her head. At the same moment these persons rose and walked towards the parapet. Winterbourne had asked the coachman to stop; he now descended from the carriage. His companion looked at him a moment in silence; then, while he raised his hat, she drove majestically away. Winterbourne stood there; he had turned his eyes towards Daisy and her cavalier. They evidently saw no one; they were too deeply occupied with each other. When they reached the low garden-wall they stood a moment looking off at the great flat-topped pine-clusters of the Villa Borghese; then Giovanelli seated himself familiarly upon the broad ledge of the wall. The western sun in the opposite sky sent out a brilliant shaft through a couple of cloud-bars, whereupon Daisy's companion took her parasol out of her hands and opened it. She came a little nearer, and he held the parasol over her; then, still holding it, he let it rest upon her shoulder, so that both of their heads were hidden from Winterbourne. This young man lingered a moment, then he began to walk. But he walked —

not towards the couple with the parasol — towards the residence of his aunt, Mrs. Costello.

He flattered himself on the following day that there was no smiling among the servants when he, at least, asked for Mrs. Miller at her hotel. This lady and her daughter, however, were not at home; and on the next day after, repeating his visit, Winterbourne again had the misfortune not to find them. Mrs. Walker's party took place on the evening of the third day, and, in spite of the frigidity of his last interview with the hostess, Winterbourne was among the guests. Mrs. Walker was one of those American ladies who, while residing abroad, make a point, in their own phrase, of studying European society; and she had on this occasion collected several specimens of her diversely-born fellow-mortals to serve, as it were, as text-books. When Winterbourne arrived, Daisy Miller was not there, but in a few moments he saw her mother come in alone, very shyly and ruefully. Mrs. Miller's hair above her exposed-looking temples was more frizzled than ever. As she approached Mrs. Walker, Winterbourne also drew near.

"You see I've come all alone," said poor Mrs. Miller. "I'm so frightened I don't know what to do. It's the first time I've ever been to a party alone, especially in this country. I wanted to bring Randolph, or Eugenio, or some one, but Daisy just pushed me off by myself. I ain't used to going round alone."

"And does not your daughter intend to favor us with her society?" demanded Mrs. Walker, impressively.

"Well, Daisy's all dressed," said Mrs. Miller, with that accent of the dispassionate, if not of the philosophic, historian with which she always recorded the current incidents of her daughter's career. "She got dressed on purpose before dinner. But she's got a friend of hers there; that gentleman — the Italian — that she wanted to bring. They've got going at the piano; it seems as if they couldn't leave off. Mr. Giovanelli sings splendidly. But I guess they'll come before very long," concluded Mrs. Miller, hopefully.

"I'm sorry she should come in that way," said Mrs. Walker.

"Well, I told her that there was no use in her getting dressed before dinner if she was going to wait three hours," responded Daisy's mamma. "I didn't see the use of her putting on such a dress as that to sit round with Mr. Giovanelli."

"This is most horrible!" said Mrs. Walker, turning away and addressing herself to Winterbourne. "*Elle s'affiche*. It's her revenge for my having ventured to remonstrate with her. When she comes I shall not speak to her."

Daisy came after eleven o'clock; but she was not, on such an occasion, a young lady to wait to be spoken to. She rustled forward in radiant loveliness, smiling and chattering, carrying a large bouquet, and attended by

Mr. Giovanelli. Every one stopped talking, and turned and looked at her. She came straight to Mrs. Walker. "I'm afraid you thought I never was coming, so I sent mother off to tell you. I wanted to make Mr. Giovanelli practise some things before he came; you know he sings beautifully, and I want you to ask him to sing. This is Mr. Giovanelli; you know I introduced him to you; he's got the most lovely voice, and he knows the most charming set of songs. I made him go over them this evening on purpose; we had the greatest time at the hotel." Of all this Daisy delivered herself with the sweetest, brightest audibleness, looking now at her hostess and now round the room, while she gave a series of little pats round her shoulders to the edges of her dress. "Is there any one I know?" she asked.

"I think every one knows you!" said Mrs. Walker, pregnantly, and she gave a very cursory greeting to Mr. Giovanelli. This gentleman bore himself gallantly. He smiled and bowed, and showed his white teeth; he curled his mustaches and rolled his eyes, and performed all the proper functions of a handsome Italian at an evening party. He sang very prettily half a dozen songs, though Mrs. Walker afterwards declared that she had been quite unable to find out who asked him. It was apparently not Daisy who had given him his orders. Daisy sat at a distance from the piano; and though she had publicly, as it were, professed a high admiration for his singing, talked, not inaudibly, while it was going on.

"It's a pity these rooms are so small; we can't dance," she said to Winterbourne, as if she had seen him five minutes before.

"I am not sorry we can't dance," Winterbourne answered; "I don't dance."

"Of course you don't dance; you're too stiff," said Miss Daisy. "I hope you enjoyed your drive with Mrs. Walker!"

"No, I didn't enjoy it; I preferred walking with you."

"We paired off; that was much better," said Daisy. "But did you ever hear anything so cool as Mrs. Walker's wanting me to get into her carriage and drop poor Mr. Giovanelli, and under the pretext that it was proper? People have different ideas! It would have been most unkind; he had been talking about that walk for ten days."

"He should not have talked about it at all," said Winterbourne; "he would never have proposed to a young lady of this country to walk about the streets with him."

"About the streets?" cried Daisy, with her pretty stare. "Where, then, would he have proposed to her to walk? The Pincio is not the streets, either; and I, thank goodness, am not a young lady of this country. The young ladies of this country have a dreadfully poky time of it, so far as I can learn; I don't see why I should change my habits for *them*."

"I am afraid your habits are those of a flirt," said Winterbourne, gravely.

"Of course they are," she cried, giving him her little smiling stare again. "I'm a fearful, frightful flirt! Did you ever hear of a nice girl that was not? But I suppose you will tell me now that I am not a nice girl."

"You're a very nice girl; but I wish you would flirt with me, and me only," said Winterbourne.

"Ah! thank you — thank you very much; you are the last man I should think of flirting with. As I have had the pleasure of informing you, you are too stiff."

"You say that too often," said Winterbourne.

Daisy gave a delighted laugh. "If I could have the sweet hope of making you angry, I should say it again."

"Don't do that; when I am angry I'm stiffer than ever. But if you won't flirt with me, do cease, at least, to flirt with your friend at the piano; they don't understand that sort of thing here."

"I thought they understood nothing else!" exclaimed Daisy.

"Not in young unmarried women."

"It seems to me much more proper in young unmarried women than in old married ones," Daisy declared.

"Well," said Winterbourne, "when you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place. Flirting is a purely American custom; it doesn't exist here. So when you show yourself in public with Mr. Giovanelli, and without your mother —"

"Gracious! poor mother!" interposed Daisy.

"Though you may be flirting, Mr. Giovanelli is not; he means something else."

"He isn't preaching, at any rate," said Daisy, with vivacity. "And if you want very much to know, we are neither of us flirting; we are too good friends for that; we are very intimate friends."

"Ah!" rejoined Winterbourne, "if you are in love with each other, it is another affair."

She had allowed him up to this point to talk so frankly that he had no expectation of shocking her by this ejaculation; but she immediately got up, blushing visibly, and leaving him to exclaim mentally that little American flirts were the queerest creatures in the world. "Mr. Giovanelli, at least," she said, giving her interlocutor a single glance, "never says such very disagreeable things to me."

Winterbourne was bewildered; he stood staring. Mr. Giovanelli had finished singing. He left the piano and came over to Daisy. "Won't you come into the other room and have some tea?" he asked, bending before her with his ornamental smile.

Daisy turned to Winterbourne, beginning to smile again. He was still more perplexed, for this inconsequent smile made nothing clear, though it seemed to prove, indeed, that she had a sweetness and softness that reverted instinctively to the pardon of offences. "It has never occurred to

Mr. Winterbourne to offer me any tea," she said, with her little tormenting manner.

" I have offered you advice," Winterbourne rejoined.

" I prefer weak tea! " cried Daisy, and she went off with the brilliant Giovanelli. She sat with him in the adjoining room, in the embrasure of the window, for the rest of the evening. There was an interesting performance at the piano, but neither of these young people gave heed to it. When Daisy came to take leave of Mrs. Walker, this lady conscientiously repaired the weakness of which she had been guilty at the moment of the young girl's arrival. She turned her back straight upon Miss Miller, and left her to depart with what grace she might. Winterbourne was standing near the door; he saw it all. Daisy turned very pale, and looked at her mother; but Mrs. Miller was humbly unconscious of any violation of the usual social forms. She appeared, indeed, to have felt an incongruous impulse to draw attention to her own striking observance of them. " Goodnight, Mrs. Walker," she said; " we've had a beautiful evening. You see, if I let Daisy come to parties without me, I don't want her to go away without me." Daisy turned away, looking with a pale, grave face at the circle near the door; Winterbourne saw that, for the first moment, she was too much shocked and puzzled even for indignation. He on his side was greatly touched.

" That was very cruel," he said to Mrs. Walker.

" She never enters my drawing-room again! " replied his hostess.

Since Winterbourne was not to meet her in Mrs. Walker's drawing-room, he went as often as possible to Mrs. Miller's hotel. The ladies were rarely at home; but when he found them the devoted Giovanelli was always present. Very often the brilliant little Roman was in the drawing-room with Daisy alone, Mrs. Miller being apparently constantly of the opinion that discretion is the better part of surveillance. Winterbourne noted, at first with surprise, that Daisy on these occasions was never embarrassed or annoyed by his own entrance; but he very presently began to feel that she had no more surprises for him; the unexpected in her behavior was the only thing to expect. She showed no displeasure at her tête-à-tête with Giovanelli being interrupted; she could chatter as freshly and freely with two gentlemen as with one; there was always, in her conversation, the same odd mixture of audacity and puerility. Winterbourne remarked to himself that if she was seriously interested in Giovanelli, it was very singular that she should not take more trouble to preserve the sanctity of their interviews; and he liked her the more for her innocent-looking indifference and her apparently inexhaustible good-humor. He could hardly have said why, but she seemed to him a girl who would never be jealous. At the risk of exciting a somewhat derisive smile on the reader's part, I may affirm that with regard to the women who had hitherto interested him, it very often seemed to Winterbourne among the possibilities that, given

certain contingencies, he should be afraid — literally afraid — of these ladies; he had a pleasant sense that he should never be afraid of Daisy Miller. It must be added that this sentiment was not altogether flattering to Daisy; it was part of his conviction, or rather of his apprehension, that she would prove a very light young person.

But she was evidently very much interested in Giovanelli. She looked at him whenever he spoke; she was perpetually telling him to do this and to do that; she was constantly " chaffing " and abusing him. She appeared completely to have forgotten that Winterbourne had said anything to displease her at Mrs. Walker's little party. One Sunday afternoon, having gone to St. Peter's with his aunt, Winterbourne perceived Daisy strolling about the great church in company with the inevitable Giovanelli. Presently he pointed out the young girl and her cavalier to Mrs. Costello. This lady looked at them a moment through her eye-glass, and then she said,

" That's what makes you so pensive in these days, eh? "

" I had not the least idea I was pensive," said the young man.

" You are very much preoccupied; you are thinking of something."

" And what is it," he asked, " that you accuse me of thinking of? "

" Of that young lady's — Miss Baker's, Miss Chandler's — what's her name? — Miss Miller's intrigue with that little barber's block."

" Do you call it an intrigue," Winterbourne asked — " an affair that goes on with such peculiar publicity? "

" That's their folly," said Mrs. Costello; " it's not their merit."

" No," rejoined Winterbourne, with something of that pensiveness to which his aunt had alluded. " I don't believe that there is anything to be called an intrigue."

" I have heard a dozen people speak of it; they say she is quite carried away by him."

" They are certainly very intimate," said Winterbourne.

Mrs. Costello inspected the young couple again with her optical instrument. " He is very handsome. One easily sees how it is. She thinks him the most elegant man in the world — the finest gentleman. She has never seen anything like him; he is better, even, than the courier. It was the courier, probably, who introduced him; and if he succeeds in marrying the young lady, the courier will come in for a magnificent commission."

" I don't believe she thinks of marrying him," said Winterbourne, " and I don't believe he hopes to marry her."

" You may be very sure she thinks of nothing. She goes on from day to day, from hour to hour, as they did in the Golden Age. I can imagine nothing more vulgar. And at the same time," added Mrs. Costello, " depend upon it that she may tell you any moment that she is ' engaged.' "

" I think that is more than Giovanelli expects," said Winterbourne.

" Who is Giovanelli? "

" The little Italian. I have asked questions about him, and learned something. He is apparently a perfectly respectable little man. I believe he is, in a small way, a *cavaliere avvocato*. But he doesn't move in what are called the first circles. I think it is really not absolutely impossible that the courier introduced him. He is evidently immensely charmed with Miss Miller. If she thinks him the finest gentleman in the world, he, on his side, has never found himself in personal contact with such splendor, such opulence, such expensiveness, as this young lady's. And then she must seem to him wonderfully pretty and interesting. I rather doubt that he dreams of marrying her. That must appear to him too impossible a piece of luck. He has nothing but his handsome face to offer, and there is a substantial Mr. Miller in that mysterious land of dollars. Giovanelli knows that he hasn't a title to offer. If he were only a count or a *marchese!* He must wonder at his luck, at the way they have taken him up."

" He accounts for it by his handsome face, and thinks Miss Miller a young lady *qui se passe ses fantaisies!* " said Mrs. Costello.

" It is very true," Winterbourne pursued, " that Daisy and her mamma have not yet risen to that stage of — what shall I call it? — of culture, at which the idea of catching a count or a *marchese* begins. I believe that they are intellectually incapable of that conception."

" Ah! but the *avvocato* can't believe it," said Mrs. Costello.

Of the observation excited by Daisy's " intrigue," Winterbourne gathered that day at St. Peter's sufficient evidence. A dozen of the American colonists in Rome came to talk with Mrs. Costello, who sat on a little portable stool at the base of one of the great pilasters. The vesper service was going forward in splendid chants and organ-tones in the adjacent choir, and meanwhile, between Mrs. Costello and her friends, there was a great deal said about poor little Miss Miller's going really " too far." Winterbourne was not pleased with what he heard; but when, coming out upon the great steps of the church, he saw Daisy, who had emerged before him, get into an open cab with her accomplice and roll away through the cynical streets of Rome, he could not deny to himself that she was going very far indeed. He felt very sorry for her — not exactly that he believed that she had completely lost her head, but because it was painful to hear so much that was pretty and undefended and natural assigned to a vulgar place among the categories of disorder. He made an attempt after this to give a hint to Mrs. Miller. He met one day in the Corso a friend, a tourist like himself, who had just come out of the Doria Palace, where he had been walking through the beautiful gallery. His friend talked for a moment about the superb portrait of Innocent X., by Velasquez, which hangs in one of the cabinets of the palace, and then said, " And in the same cabinet, by-the-way, I had the pleasure of contemplating a picture of a different kind — that pretty American girl whom you pointed out to me last week." In answer to Winterbourne's inquiries, his friend narrated that the pretty

American girl — prettier than ever — was seated with a companion in the secluded nook in which the great papal portrait was enshrined.

"Who was her companion?" asked Winterbourne.

"A little Italian with a bouquet in his button-hole. The girl is delightfully pretty; but I thought I understood from you the other day that she was a young lady *du meilleur monde.*"

"So she is!" answered Winterbourne; and having assured himself that his informant had seen Daisy and her companion but five minutes before, he jumped into a cab and went to call on Mrs. Miller. She was at home; but she apologized to him for receiving him in Daisy's absence.

"She's gone out somewhere with Mr. Giovanelli," said Mrs. Miller. "She's always going round with Mr. Giovanelli."

"I have noticed that they are very intimate," Winterbourne observed.

"Oh, it seems as if they couldn't live without each other!" said Mrs. Miller. "Well, he's a real gentleman, anyhow. I keep telling Daisy she's engaged!"

"And what does Daisy say?"

"Oh, she says she isn't engaged. But she might as well be!" this impartial parent resumed; "she goes on as if she was. But I've made Mr. Giovanelli promise to tell me, if *she* doesn't. I should want to write to Mr. Miller about it — shouldn't you?"

Winterbourne replied that he certainly should; and the state of mind of Daisy's mamma struck him as so unprecedented in the annals of parental vigilance that he gave up as utterly irrelevant the attempt to place her upon her guard.

After this Daisy was never at home, and Winterbourne ceased to meet her at the houses of their common acquaintances, because, as he perceived, these shrewd people had quite made up their minds that she was going too far. They ceased to invite her; and they intimated that they desired to express to observant Europeans the great truth that, though Miss Daisy Miller was a young American lady, her behavior was not representative — was regarded by her compatriots as abnormal. Winterbourne wondered how she felt about all the cold shoulders that were turned towards her, and sometimes it annoyed him to suspect that she did not feel at all. He said to himself that she was too light and childish, too uncultivated and unreasoning, too provincial, to have reflected upon her ostracism, or even to have perceived it. Then at other moments he believed that she carried about in her elegant and irresponsible little organism a defiant, passionate, perfectly observant consciousness of the impression she produced. He asked himself whether Daisy's defiance came from the consciousness of innocence, or from her being, essentially, a young person of the reckless class. It must be admitted that holding one's self to a belief in Daisy's "innocence" came to seem to Winterbourne more and more a matter of finespun gallantry. As I have already had occasion to relate, he was angry at

finding himself reduced to chopping logic about this young lady; he was vexed at his want of instinctive certitude as to how far her eccentricities were generic, national, and how far they were personal. From either view of them he had somehow missed her, and now it was too late. She was "carried away" by Mr. Giovanelli.

A few days after his brief interview with her mother, he encountered her in that beautiful abode of flowering desolation known as the Palace of the Cæsars. The early Roman spring had filled the air with bloom and perfume, and the rugged surface of the Palatine was muffled with tender verdure. Daisy was strolling along the top of one of those great mounds of ruin that are embanked with mossy marble and paved with monumental inscriptions. It seemed to him that Rome had never been so lovely as just then. He stood looking off at the enchanting harmony of line and color that remotely encircles the city, inhaling the softly humid odors, and feeling the freshness of the year and the antiquity of the place reaffirm themselves in mysterious interfusion. It seemed to him, also, that Daisy had never looked so pretty; but this had been an observation of his whenever he met her. Giovanelli was at her side, and Giovanelli, too, wore an aspect of even unwonted brilliancy.

"Well," said Daisy, "I should think you would be lonesome!"

"Lonesome?" asked Winterbourne.

"You are always going round by your self. Can't you get any one to walk with you?"

"I am not so fortunate," said Winterbourne, "as your companion."

Giovanelli, from the first, had treated Winterbourne with distinguished politeness. He listened with a deferential air to his remarks; he laughed punctiliously at his pleasantries; he seemed disposed to testify to his belief that Winterbourne was a superior young man. He carried himself in no degree like a jealous wooer; he had obviously a great deal of tact; he had no objection to your expecting a little humility of him. It even seemed to Winterbourne at times that Giovanelli would find a certain mental relief in being able to have a private understanding with him — to say to him, as an intelligent man, that, bless you, *he* knew how extraordinary was this young lady, and didn't flatter himself with delusive — or, at least, *too* delusive — hopes of matrimony and dollars. On this occasion he strolled away from his companion to pluck a sprig of almond-blossom, which he carefully arranged in his button-hole.

"I know why you say that," said Daisy, watching Giovanelli. "Because you think I go round too much with *him.*" And she nodded at her attendant.

"Every one thinks so — if you care to know," said Winterbourne.

"Of course I care to know!" Daisy exclaimed, seriously. "But I don't believe it. They are only pretending to be shocked. They don't really care a straw what I do. Besides, I don't go round so much."

"I think you will find they do care. They will show it disagreeably."

Daisy looked at him a moment. "How disagreeably?"

"Haven't you noticed anything?" Winterbourne asked.

"I have noticed you. But I noticed you were as stiff as an umbrella the first time I saw you."

"You will find I am not so stiff as several others," said Winterbourne, smiling.

"How shall I find it?"

"By going to see the others."

"What will they do to me?"

"They will give you the cold shoulder. Do you know what that means?"

Daisy was looking at him intently; she began to color.

"Do you mean as Mrs. Walker did the other night?"

"Exactly!" said Winterbourne.

She looked away at Giovanelli, who was decorating himself with his almond-blossom. Then, looking back at Winterbourne, "I shouldn't think you would let people be so unkind!" she said.

"How can I help it?" he asked.

"I should think you would say something."

"I did say something;" and he paused a moment. "I say that your mother tells me that she believes you are engaged."

"Well, she does," said Daisy, very simply.

Winterbourne began to laugh. "And does Randolph believe it?" he asked.

"I guess Randolph doesn't believe anything," said Daisy. Randolph's scepticism excited Winterbourne to further hilarity, and he observed that Giovanelli was coming back to them. Daisy, observing it too, addressed herself again to her countryman. "Since you have mentioned it," she said, "I *am* engaged." . . . Winterbourne looked at her; he had stopped laughing. "You don't believe it!" she added.

He was silent a moment; and then, "Yes, I believe it," he said.

"Oh, no, you don't!" she answered. "Well, then — I am not!"

The young girl and her cicerone were on their way to the gate of the enclosure, so that Winterbourne, who had but lately entered, presently took leave of them. A week afterwards he went to dine at a beautiful villa on the Cælian Hill, and, on arriving, dismissed his hired vehicle. The evening was charming, and he promised himself the satisfaction of walking home beneath the Arch of Constantine and past the vaguely-lighted monuments of the Forum. There was a waning moon in the sky, and her radiance was not brilliant, but she was veiled in a thin cloud-curtain which seemed to diffuse and equalize it. When, on his return from the villa (it was eleven o'clock), Winterbourne approached the dusky circle of the Colosseum, it occurred to him, as a lover of the picturesque, that the interior, in the pale moonshine, would be well worth a glance. He turned

aside and walked to one of the empty arches, near which, as he observed, an open carriage — one of the little Roman street-cabs — was stationed. Then he passed in, among the cavernous shadows of the great structure, and emerged upon the clear and silent arena. The place had never seemed to him more impressive. One-half of the gigantic circus was in deep shade, the other was sleeping in the luminous dusk. As he stood there he began to murmur Byron's famous lines, out of "Manfred"; but before he had finished his quotation he remembered that if nocturnal meditations in the Colosseum are recommended by the poets, they are deprecated by the doctors. The historic atmosphere was there, certainly; but the historic atmosphere, scientifically considered, was no better than a villainous miasma. Winterbourne walked to the middle of the arena, to take a more general glance, intending thereafter to make a hasty retreat. The great cross in the centre was covered with shadow; it was only as he drew near it that he made it out distinctly. Then he saw that two persons were stationed upon the low steps which formed its base. One of these was a woman, seated; her companion was standing in front of her.

Presently the sound of the woman's voice came to him distinctly in the warm night air. "Well, he looks at us as one of the old lions or tigers may have looked at the Christian martyrs!" These were the words he heard, in the familiar accent of Miss Daisy Miller.

"Let us hope he is not very hungry," responded the ingenious Giovanelli. "He will have to take me first; you will serve for dessert!"

Winterbourne stopped, with a sort of horror, and, it must be added, with a sort of relief. It was as if a sudden illumination had been flashed upon the ambiguity of Daisy's behavior, and the riddle had become easy to read. She was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect. He stood there looking at her — looking at her companion, and not reflecting that though he saw them vaguely, he himself must have been more brightly visible. He felt angry with himself that he had bothered so much about the right way of regarding Miss Daisy Miller. Then, as he was going to advance again, he checked himself; not from the fear that he was doing her injustice, but from the sense of the danger of appearing unbecomingly exhilarated by this sudden revulsion from cautious criticism. He turned away towards the entrance of the place, but, as he did so, he heard Daisy speak again.

"Why, it was Mr. Winterbourne! He saw me, and he cuts me!"

What a clever little reprobate she was, and how smartly she played at injured innocence! But he wouldn't cut her. Winterbourne came forward again, and went towards the great cross. Daisy had got up; Giovanelli lifted his hat. Winterbourne had now begun to think simply of the craziness, from a sanitary point of view, of a delicate young girl lounging away the evening in this nest of malaria. What if she *were* a clever little repro-

bate? that was no reason for her dying of the *perniciosa*. " How long have you been here? " he asked, almost brutally.

Daisy, lovely in the flattering moonlight, looked at him a moment. Then — " All the evening," she answered, gently. . . . " I never saw anything so pretty."

" I am afraid," said Winterbourne, " that you will not think Roman fever very pretty. This is the way people catch it. I wonder," he added, turning to Giovanelli, " that you, a native Roman, should countenance such a terrible indiscretion."

" Ah," said the handsome native, " for myself I am not afraid."

" Neither am I — for you! I am speaking for this young lady."

Giovanelli lifted his well-shaped eyebrows and showed his brilliant teeth. But he took Winterbourne's rebuke with docility. " I told the signorina it was a grave indiscretion; but when was the signorina ever prudent? "

" I never was sick, and I don't mean to be! " the signorina declared. " I don't look like much, but I'm healthy! I was bound to see the Colosseum by moonlight; I shouldn't have wanted to go home without that; and we have had the most beautiful time, haven't we, Mr. Giovanelli? If there has been any danger, Eugenio can give me some pills. He has got some splendid pills."

" I should advise you," said Winterbourne, " to drive home as fast as possible and take one! "

" What you say is very wise," Giovanelli rejoined. " I will go and make sure the carriage is at hand." And he went forward rapidly.

Daisy followed with Winterbourne. He kept looking at her; she seemed not in the least embarrassed. Winterbourne said nothing; Daisy chattered about the beauty of the place. " Well, I *have* seen the Colosseum by moonlight! " she exclaimed. " That's one good thing." Then, noticing Winterbourne's silence, she asked him why he didn't speak. He made no answer; he only began to laugh. They passed under one of the dark archways; Giovanelli was in front with the carriage. Here Daisy stopped a moment, looking at the young American. " *Did* you believe I was engaged the other day? " she asked.

" It doesn't matter what I believed the other day," said Winterbourne, still laughing.

" Well, what do you believe now? "

" I believe that it makes very little difference whether you are engaged or not! "

He felt the young girl's pretty eyes fixed upon him through the thick gloom of the archway; she was apparently going to answer. But Giovanelli hurried her forward. " Quick! quick! " he said; " if we get in by midnight we are quite safe."

Daisy took her seat in the carriage, and the fortunate Italian placed himself beside her. "Don't forget Eugenio's pills!" said Winterbourne, as he lifted his hat.

"I don't care," said Daisy, in a little strange tone, "whether I have Roman fever or not!" Upon this the cab-driver cracked his whip, and they rolled away over the desultory patches of the antique pavement.

Winterbourne, to do him justice, as it were, mentioned to no one that he had encountered Miss Miller, at midnight, in the Colosseum with a gentleman; but, nevertheless, a couple of days later, the fact of her having been there under these circumstances was known to every member of the little American circle, and commented accordingly. Winterbourne reflected that they had of course known it at the hotel, and that, after Daisy's return, there had been an exchange of remarks between the porter and the cab-driver. But the young man was conscious, at the same moment, that it had ceased to be a matter of serious regret to him that the little American flirt should be "talked about" by low-minded menials. These people, a day or two later, had serious information to give: the little American flirt was alarmingly ill. Winterbourne, when the rumor came to him, immediately went to the hotel for more news. He found that two or three charitable friends had preceded him, and that they were being entertained in Mrs. Miller's salon by Randolph.

"It's going round at night," said Randolph — "that's what made her sick. She's always going round at night. I shouldn't think she'd want to, it's so plaguey dark. You can't see anything here at night, except when there's a moon! In America there's always a moon!" Mrs. Miller was invisible; she was now, at least, giving her daughter the advantage of her society. It was evident that Daisy was dangerously ill.

Winterbourne went often to ask for news of her, and once he saw Mrs. Miller, who, though deeply alarmed, was, rather to his surprise, perfectly composed, and, as it appeared, a most efficient and judicious nurse. She talked a good deal about Dr. Davis, but Winterbourne paid her the compliment of saying to himself that she was not, after all, such a monstrous goose. "Daisy spoke of you the other day," she said to him. "Half the time she doesn't know what she's saying, but that time I think she did. She gave me a message. She told me to tell you — she told me to tell you that she never was engaged to that handsome Italian. I am sure I am very glad. Mr. Giovanelli hasn't been near us since she was taken ill. I thought he was so much of a gentleman; but I don't call that very polite! A lady told me that he was afraid I was angry with him for taking Daisy round at night. Well, so I am; but I suppose he knows I'm a lady. I would scorn to scold him. Anyway, she says she's not engaged. I don't know why she wanted you to know; but she said to me three times, 'Mind you tell Mr. Winterbourne.' And then she told me to ask if you remembered the

time you went to that castle in Switzerland. But I said I wouldn't give any such messages as that. Only, if she is not engaged, I'm sure I'm glad to know it."

But, as Winterbourne had said, it mattered very little. A week after this the poor girl died; it had been a terrible case of the fever. Daisy's grave was in the little Protestant cemetery, in an angle of the wall of imperial Rome, beneath the cypresses and the thick spring-flowers. Winterbourne stood there beside it, with a number of other mourners — a number larger than the scandal excited by the young lady's career would have led you to expect. Near him stood Giovanelli, who came nearer still before Winterbourne turned away. Giovanelli was very pale: on this occasion he had no flower in his button-hole; he seemed to wish to say something. At last he said, "She was the most beautiful young lady I ever saw, and the most amiable;" and then he added in a moment, "and she was the most innocent."

Winterbourne looked at him, and presently repeated his words, "And the most innocent?"

"The most innocent!"

Winterbourne felt sore and angry. "Why the devil," he asked, "did you take her to that fatal place?"

Mr. Giovanelli's urbanity was apparently imperturbable. He looked on the ground a moment, and then he said, "For myself I had no fear; and she wanted to go."

"That was no reason!" Winterbourne declared.

The subtle Roman again dropped his eyes. "If she had lived, I should have got nothing. She would never have married me, I am sure."

"She would never have married you?"

"For a moment I hoped so. But no. I am sure."

Winterbourne listened to him: he stood staring at the raw protuberance among the April daisies. When he turned away again, Mr. Giovanelli with his light, slow step, had retired.

Winterbourne almost immediately left Rome; but the following summer he again met his aunt, Mrs. Costello, at Vevay. Mrs. Costello was fond of Vevay. In the interval Winterbourne had often thought of Daisy Miller and her mystifying manners. One day he spoke of her to his aunt — said it was on his conscience that he had done her injustice.

"I am sure I don't know," said Mrs. Costello. "How did your injustice affect her?"

"She sent me a message before her death which I didn't understand at the time; but I have understood it since. She would have appreciated one's esteem."

"Is that a modest way," asked Mrs. Costello, "of saying that she would have reciprocated one's affection?"

Winterbourne offered no answer to this question; but he presently said,

"You were right in that remark that you made last summer. I was booked to make a mistake. I have lived too long in foreign parts."

Nevertheless, he went back to live at Geneva, whence there continue to come the most contradictory accounts of his motives of sojourn: a report that he is "studying" hard — an intimation that he is much interested in a very clever foreign lady.

LAFCADIO HEARN

(1850–1904)

LAFCADIO HEARN was born at Santa Maura, one of the Ionian Islands, of Greek and English parents. In spite of this, and of his early schooling in England, he is usually considered an American writer He came to the United States as a young man and engaged for some years in journalism. His first short novel, *Chita*, appeared in 1889. *Youma* was published the following year Shortly after, he went to Japan, became a naturalised Japanese subject, and married a Japanese woman He taught English literature for some years at the University of Tokio. Hearn's best-known works are his essays on Japanese subjects. Yet his early short novels, mentioned above, are among his most beautiful writings

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YOUMA

THE *da*, during old colonial days, often held high rank in rich Martinique households. The *da* was usually a Creole negress, — more often, at all events, of the darker than of the lighter hue, — more commonly a *capresse* than a *mestive;* but in her particular case the prejudice of color did not exist. The *da* was a slave; but no freedwoman, however beautiful or cultivated, could enjoy social privileges equal to those of certain *das*. The *da* was respected and loved as a mother: she was at once a foster-mother and nurse. For the Creole child had two mothers: the aristocratic white mother who gave him birth; the dark bond-mother who gave him all care, — who nursed him, bathed him, taught him to speak the soft and musical speech of slaves, took him out in her arms to show him the beautiful tropic world, told him wonderful folk-stories of evenings, lulled him to sleep, attended to his every possible want by day or by night. It was not to be wondered at that during infancy the *da* should have been loved more than the white mother: when there was any marked preference it was nearly always in the *da's* favor. The child was much more with her than with his real mother: she alone satisfied all his little needs; he found her more indulgent, more patient, perhaps even more caressing, than the other. The *da* was herself at heart a child, speaking a child-language, finding pleasure in childish things, — artless, playful, affectionate; she comprehended the thoughts, the impulses, the pains, the faults of the little one as

the white mother could not always have done: she knew intuitively how to soothe him upon all occasions, how to amuse him, how to excite and caress his imagination; — there was absolute harmony between their natures, — a happy community of likes and dislikes, — a perfect sympathy in the animal joy of being. Later on, when the child had become old enough to receive his first lessons from a tutor or governess, to learn to speak French, the affection for the *da* and the affection for the mother began to differentiate in accordance with mental expansion; but, though the mother might be more loved, the *da* was not less cherished than before. The love of the nurse lasted through life; and the relation of the *da* to the family seldom ceased, — except in those cruel instances where she was only " hired " from another slave-holder.

In many cases the family *da* had been born upon the estate: — under the same roof she might serve as nurse for two generations. More often it would happen, that as the family multiplied and divided, — as the sons and daughters, growing up, became themselves fathers and mothers, — she would care for all their children in turn. She ended her days with her masters: although she was legally property, it would have been deemed almost an infamy to sell her. When freed by gratitude — *pour services rendus,* — she did not care to make a home of her own: freedom had small value for her except in the event of her outliving those to whom she was attached. She had children of her own, for whom she would have desired freedom rather than for herself, and for whom she might rightfully ask it, since she had sacrificed so much of her own maternal pleasures for the sake of others' children. She was unselfish and devoted to a degree which compelled gratitude even from natures of iron; — she represented the highest development of natural goodness possible in a race mentally undeveloped, kept half savage by subservience, but physically refined in a remarkable manner by climate, environment, and all those mysterious influences which form the characteristics of Creole peoples.

The *da* is already of the past. Her special type was a product of slavery, largely created by selection: the one creation of slavery perhaps not unworthy of regret, — one strange flowering amid all the rank dark growths of that bitter soil. The atmosphere of freedom was not essentially fatal to the permanence of the type; but with freedom came many unlooked-for changes: a great industrial depression due to foreign rivalry and new discoveries, — a commercial crisis, in brief, — accompanied the establishment of universal suffrage, the subordination of the white element to the black by a political upheaval, and the total disintegration of the old social structure. The transformation was too violent for good results; the abuse of political powers too speedily and indiscriminately conferred, intensified the old hates and evolved new ones: the races drew forever apart when they needed each other most. Then the increasing difficulty of existence quickly developed egotism: generosity and prosperity departed together;

Creole life shrank into narrower channels; and the character of all classes visibly hardened under pressure of necessities previously unknown.

. . . There are really no more *das:* there are now only *gardiennes* or *bonnes* — nurses who can seldom keep a place more than three months. The loyalty and simplicity of the *da* have become traditions: vain to seek for any parallels among the new generation of salaried domestics! But of those who used to be *das,* several survive, and still bear the name, which, once conferred, is retained through life as an honorific title. Some are yet to be seen in Saint Pierre. . . . There is a very fine house on the seaward side of the Grande Rue, for example, on whose marble door-step one may be observed almost every fine morning, — a very aged negress, who loves the sun. That is Da Siyotte. Gentlemen of wealth and high position, merchants and judges, salute her as they pass by. You might see the men of the family, — the gray old father and his handsome sons, — pause to chat a moment with her before going to their offices. You might see young ladies bend down and kiss her before taking their places in the carriage for a drive. You would find, — could you linger long enough, — that all visitors greet her with a smile, and a kindly query: — "*Coument ou yé, Da Siyotte?* " . . . Woe to the stranger who should speak rudely to her, under the impression that she is only a servant! . . . "*Si elle n'est qu'une domestique,*" said the master of the house, rebuking such a one, — "*alors vous n'êtes qu'un valet!* " For to insult the *da,* is to insult the household. When she dies, she will have such a funeral as money alone could not obtain, — a funeral of the *première classe,* attended by the richest and proudest of the city. There are planters who will ride that day twenty miles over the mornes to act as pall-bearers. There are ladies who rarely tread pavement, who seldom go out except in their own vehicles, — but who will follow the coffin of that old negress on foot, in the hot sun, all the way to the *Cimetière du Mouillage.* And they will inter their *da* in the family vault, while the crowns of the great palms quiver to the *bourdon.*

I

THERE are old persons still living in Saint Pierre who remember Youma, a tall *capresse,* the property of Madame Léonie Peyronnette. The servant was better known than the mistress; — for Madame Peyronnette went out little after the loss of her husband, a wealthy merchant, who had left her in more than comfortable circumstances.

Youma was a pet slave, and also the godchild of Madame Peyronnette: it was not uncommon during the old régime for Creole ladies to become godmothers of little slaves. Douceline, the mother of Youma, had been purchased as a *da* for Madame Peyronnette's only child, Aimée — and had died when Aimée was nearly five years old. The two children were nearly the same age, and seemed much attached to each other: after

Douceline's death, Madame Peyronnette resolved to bring up the little capresse as a playmate for her daughter.

The dispositions of the two children were noticeably different; and with their growth, the difference became more marked. Aimée was demonstrative and affectionate, sensitive and passionate, — quick to veer from joy to grief, from tears to smiles. Youma, on the contrary, was almost taciturn, seldom betrayed emotion: she would play silently when Aimée screamed, and scarcely smile when Aimée laughed so violently as to frighten her mother. In spite of these differences of organization, or perhaps because of them, the two got along together very well: they had never a serious quarrel, and were first separated only when Aimée, at the age of nine, was sent to a convent to receive an education more finished than it was thought that private teachers were capable of giving. Aimée's grief at parting from her playmate was not assuaged by the assurance that she would find at school nicer companions than a young capresse; — Youma, who had certainly more to lose by the change, remained outwardly calm, — "*était d'une conduite irréprochable,*" said Madame Peyronnette, too fine an observer to attribute the "irreproachable conduct" to insensibility.

The friends continued to see each other, however; for Madame Peyronnette drove to the convent in her carriage regularly every Sunday, always taking Youma with her; and Aimée seemed scarcely less delighted to see her former playmate than to see her mother. During the first summer vacation and the Christmas holidays, the companionship of childhood was naïvely resumed; and the mutual affection survived the subsequent natural change of relation: though nominally a *bonne,* who addressed Aimée as a mistress, Youma was treated almost as a foster-sister. And when Mademoiselle had finished her studies, the young slave-maid remained her confidante, and to some extent her companion. Youma had never learned to read and write; Madame Peyronnette believed that to educate her would only make her dissatisfied with the scope of a destiny out of which no effort could elevate her; but the girl had a natural intelligence which compensated her lack of mental training in many respects: she knew what to do and how to speak upon all occasions. She had grown up into a superb woman, — certainly the finest capresse of the arrondissement. Her tint was a clear deep red; — there was in her features a soft vague beauty, — a something that suggested the indefinable face of the Sphinx, especially in profile; — her hair, though curly as a black fleece, was long and not uncomely; she was graceful furthermore, and very tall. At fifteen she had seemed a woman; at eighteen she was taller by head and shoulders than her young mistress; and Mademoiselle Aimée, though not below the average stature, had to lift up her eyes, when they walked out together, to look into Youma's face. The young *bonne* was universally admired: she was one of those figures that a Martiniquais would point out with pride to a stranger as a type of the beauty of the mixed race. Even in slave days,

the Creole did not refuse himself the pleasure of admiring in human skin those tones none fear to praise in bronze or gold; he frankly confessed them exquisite; — æsthetically, his "color prejudice" had no existence. There were few young whites, nevertheless, who would have presumed to tell their admiration to Youma: there was something in the eyes and the serious manner of the young slave that protected her quite as much as the moral power of the family in which she had been brought up.

Madame Peyronnette was proud of her servant, and took pleasure in seeing her attired as handsomely as possible in the brilliant and graceful costume then worn by the women of color. In regard to dress, Youma had no reason to envy any of the freed class: she had all that a capresse could wish to wear, according to local ideas of color contrast, — *jupes* of silk and of satin, — *robes-dézindes* with head-dresses and foulards to match, — azure with orange, red with violet, yellow with bright blue, green with rose. On particular occasions, such as the first communion of Aimée, the *fête* of madame, a ball, a wedding to which the family were invited, Youma's costume was magnificent. With her trailing *jupe* of orange satin attached just below the bosom, and exposing above it the laced and embroidered chemise, with half-sleeves leaving the braceleted arms bare, and fastened at the elbow with gold clasps (*boutons-à-clous*); — her neck-kerchief (*mouchoué-en-lai*) of canary yellow striped with green and blue; — her triple necklace of graven gold beads (*collier-chou*); — her flashing ear-pendants (*zanneaux-à-clou*), each a packet of thick gold cylinders interjoined; — her yellow-banded Madras turban, dazzling with jewelry, — "trembling-pins," chainlets, quivering acorns of gold (*broches-à-gland*), — she might have posed to a painter for the Queen of Sheba. There were various pretty presents from Aimée among Youma's ornaments; but the greater part of the jewelry had been purchased for her by Madame Peyronnette, in a series of New-Year gifts. Youma was denied no pleasure which it was thought she might reasonably wish for, — except liberty.

Perhaps Youma had never given herself any trouble on the subject; but Madame Peyronnette had thought a good deal about it, and had made up her mind. Twice she refused the girl's liberty to Mademoiselle Aimée, in spite of earnest prayers and tears. The refusal was prompted by motives which Aimée was then too young fully to comprehend. Madame Peyronnette's real intention was that Youma should be enfranchised so soon as it could render her any happier to be free. For the time being, her slavery was a moral protection: it kept her legally under the control of those who loved her most: it guarded her against dangers she yet knew nothing of; — above all, it prevented the possibility of her forming a union not approved by her mistress. The godmother had plans of her own for the girl's future: she intended that Youma should one day marry a thrifty and industrious freedman, — somebody able to make a good home for her, a shipwright, cabinet-maker, builder, master mechanic of some kind; — and in such an

event she was to have her liberty, — perhaps a small dowry besides. In the meanwhile she was certainly as happy as it was possible to make her.

. . . At nineteen Aimée made a love-match, — marrying M. Louis Desrivières, a distant cousin, some ten years older. M. Desrivières had inherited a prosperous estate on the east coast; but, like many wealthy planters, passed the greater part of the year by preference in the city; and it was to his mother's residence in the Quartier du Fort that he led his young bride. Youma, in accordance with Aimée's wish, accompanied her to her new home. It was not so far from Madame Peyronnette's dwelling in the Grande Rue to the home of the Desrivières in the Rue de la Consolation that either the daughter or the goddaughter could find the separation painful.

. . . Thirteen months later, Youma, attired like some Oriental princess, carried to the baptismal font a baby girl, whose advent into the little colonial world was recorded in the Archives de la Marine, — "*Lucile-Aimée-Francillette-Marie, fille du sieur Raoul-Ernest-Louis Desrivières, et de dame Adélaïde-Hortense-Aimée Peyronnette.*" Then Youma became the *da* of little Mayotte. It is by the last of the names conferred at christening that the child is generally called and known, — or, rather, by some Creole diminutive of that name. . . . The diminutive of Marie is Mayotte.

In both families Mayotte was thought to resemble her father more than her mother: she had his gray eyes, and brown hair, — that bright hair which with children of the older colonial families darkens to apparent black as they grow up. She gave promise of becoming pretty.

Another year passed, during which no happier household could have been found: then, with cruel suddenness, Aimée was taken away by death. She had gone out with her husband in an open carriage, for a drive on the beautiful mountain-route called *La Trace;* leaving Youma with the child at home. On their return journey, one of those chilly and torrential rains which at certain seasons accompany an unexpected storm, overtook them when far from any place of shelter, and in the middle of an afternoon that had been unusually warm. Both were drenched in a moment; and a strong north-east wind, springing up, blew full upon them the whole way home. The young wife, naturally delicate, was attacked with pleurisy; and in spite of all possible aid, expired before the next sunrise.

And Youma robed her for the last time, tenderly and deftly as she had robed her for her first ball in pale blue, and for her wedding day all in vapory white. Only now, Aimée was robed all in black, as dead Creole mothers are.

M. Desrivières had loved his young wife passionately: he had married with a fresh heart, and a character little hardened by contact with the rougher side of existence. The trial was a terrible one; — for a time it was

feared that he could not survive it. When he began at last to recover from the serious illness caused by his grief, he found it impossible to linger in his home, with its memories: he went as soon as possible to his plantation, and tried to busy himself there, making from time to time brief visits to the city to see his child, whom Madame Peyronnette insisted on caring for. But Mayotte proved delicate, like her mother; and during a season of epidemic, some six months later, Madame Peyronnette decided that it would be better to send her to the country, to her father, in charge of Youma. Anse-Marine was known to be one of the healthiest places in the colony; and the child began to gain strength there, as the sensitive plant — *zhèbe-mamisé* — toughens in the warm sea-wind.

II

IT IS a long ride from Saint Pierre over the mountains to the plantation of Anse-Marine, — formerly owned by the Desrivières; but the fatigue of six hours in the saddle under a tropic sun is not likely to be felt by one susceptible to those marvellous beauties in which the route abounds. Sometimes it rises almost to those white clouds that nearly always veil the heads of the great peaks; — sometimes it slopes down through the green twilight of primitive forests; — sometimes it overlooks vast depths of valley walled in by mountains of strange shapes and tints; — sometimes it winds over undulations of cane-covered land, beyond whose yellow limit appears the vapory curve of an almost purple sea.

Perhaps, for hours together, you see no motion but that of leaves and their shadows, — hear only the sound of your horse's hoofs, or the papery rustling of cane waved by the wind, — or, from the verge of some green chasm veiled by tree-ferns, the long low flute-call of an unknown bird. But, sooner or later, at a turn of the way, you come upon something of more human interest, — some living incident full of exotic charm: such as a caravan of young colored girls, barefooted and bare-armed, transporting on their heads to market the produce of a *cacaoyère;* or a negro running by under an amazing load of bread-fruits or *régimes-bananes.*

Perhaps you may meet a troop of black men drawing to the coast upon a *diabe* or "devil," — which is a low strong vehicle with screaming axles, — a *gommier* already hollowed out and shapen for a canoe: those behind pushing, and those before pulling all together, while a drummer beats his *ka* on the bottom of the unfinished boat, to the measure of their song: "*Bom! ti canot! — allé châché! — méné vini! — Bom! ti canot!*" . . .

Or perhaps you encounter a band of woodmen, sawing into planks by the roadside some newly felled tree, with a core yellow as saffron, or vermilion-red, — a tree of which you do not know the name. It has been lifted upon a strong timber framework; and three men wield the long saw, — one above, two below, — all with their shirts off. The torso of the man above

is orange-yellow: one of the sawyers below is cinnamon-color, the other a shining black as of lacquer: all are sculpturally muscled; and they sing as they saw: —

Pou nou allé." . . .
Aïe!
Aïe! dos calé!
Aïe, scié bois,
Aïe!
Pou nou allé. . . ."

. . . Such incidents become rarer as you begin the long descent, through cane-fields and *cacaoyères,* from the wooded heights to the further sea, — leaving shadows and coolness behind to ride over lands all uncovered to the sun; but the immense peace charms like a caress, and the magnificent expansions of the view console for the seeming absence of human life. Behind you, and to north and south, the mornes heighten their semicircle above the undulating leagues of yellow cane, — and beyond them sharper summits loom, all violet, — and over the violet tower successive surgings of paler peaks and cusps and jagged ridges, — phantom blues and pearls. Before you, over the yellow miles, purples the far crescent of sea under its horizon curve, — a band of upward-fading opal light; — and a strong warm wind is blowing in your face. You ride on, sometimes up a low wide hill, sometimes over a plateau, — more often down a broad incline, — the sea alternately vanishing and reappearing, — and leave the main road at last to follow a way previously hidden by rising ground, — a plantation road, bordered with cocoa-palms. It brings you by long windings, between canes that shut off the view on either hand, to one of the prettiest valleys in the world. At least you will deem it so, as you draw rein at the verge of a morne, to admire the almost perfect half-round of softly wrinkled hills opening to the sea, — whose foam-line stretches like a snowy quivering thread between two green peaks, over a band of ebon beach; — and the golden expanse of canes below; — and the river dividing it, broadening between fringes of bamboo, to reach the breakers; — and the tenderness of shadows blue-tinted by vapors, the flickering of sunlight in the silver of cascades, the touching of sky and sea beyond all. Last, you will notice the plantation buildings on a knoll below, in a grove of cocoa-palms: — the long yellow-painted mill, with its rumbling water-wheel and tall chimney; — the *rhommerie;* — the sugar-house; — the village of thatched cabins, with banana leaves fluttering in tiny gardens; — the single-story residence of the planter, built to resist winds and earthquakes; — the cottage of the overseer; — the hurricane-house, or *case-à-vent;* — and the white silhouette of a high wooden cross at the further entrance to the little settlement.

All this was once the property of the Desrivières, — the whole valley

from shore to hill-top: the *atelier* numbered nearly one hundred and fifty hands. Since then, the plantation has been sold and resold many times, — exploited with varying fortune by foreigners as well as Creoles; — and nevertheless there have been so few changes that the place itself probably looks just as it looked fifty years, or even a hundred years ago.

But at the time when the Desrivières owned Anse-Marine, plantation life offered an aspect very different to that which it presents to-day. On this estate in particular, it was patriarchal and picturesque to a degree scarcely conceivable by one who knows the colony only since the period inaugurated by emancipation. The slaves were treated very much like children: it was a traditional family policy to sell only those who could not be controlled without physical punishment. Each adult was allowed a small garden, which he might cultivate as he pleased, — half-days being allotted twice in every week for that purpose; and the larger part of the money received for the produce, the slave was permitted to retain. Legally a slave could own nothing, yet several of the Desrivières hands were known to have economized creditable sums, with the encouragement of their owner. Work was performed with song, to the music of the drum; — there were holidays, and evenings of privileged dancing. The great occasion of the year was the *fête* of Madame Desrivières, the mother of the young planter, the old mistress (*tétesse*), — a day of *bamboulas* and *caleindas,* — when all the slaves were received by the lady on the veranda: each kissed her hand and each found in it a silver coin. But it was a delight for the visitor, especially if a European, to watch even the common incidents of this colonial country life, so full of exotic oddities and unconscious poetry.

The routine of each day opened with an amusing scene, — the morning inspection of the feet of the children. These, up to the age of nine or ten, had little to do but to play and eat. They were under the charge of the *infirmière,* Tanga, an old African woman, who, aided by her daughters, prepared their simple food, and looked after them while their mothers were in the fields. Soon after sunrise, Tanga, accompanied by the overseer, would assemble them, and make them sit down in line on the long plank benches under the awning of the infirmary building: then at the command, "*Lévé piézautt!*" they would all hold up their little feet together, and the inspection would begin. Whenever Tanga's sharp eye detected the small round swelling which betrays the presence of a *chique,* the child was sent to the infirmary for immediate treatment, and the mother's name taken down by the overseer for reprimand, — every mother being held responsible for a *chique* allowed to remain in her child's foot overnight. There was so much tickling and laughing and screaming at these inspections, that Tanga always had to frighten the children several times before the examination could be finished.

Another morning scene of interest was the departure of a singing caravan of women and girls, carrying to market on their heads various products of

the plantation: cocoa, coffee, cassia; and fruits, — cocoa-nuts, and *mangues,* oranges and bananas, corossols (custard-apples) and " cinnamon-apples " (*pommes cannelles*).

Then a merry event, which occurred almost weekly, was the sortie of the gommier, — a huge canoe nearly sixty feet long, made from a single extraordinary tree. It had no rudder, but a bow at either end, so as to move equally well in either direction; and benches for a dozen paddlers, with a raised seat in the centre for a drummer. It had two *commandeurs,* one at each bow; — it could carry a dozen barrels of rum and six or seven casks of sugar; — and it was used chiefly for transporting these products to the small vessels from Saint Pierre, which dared not venture near the dangerous surf. The gommier itself could only be launched from a sloping cradle built expressly for it over deep water in the hollow of a projecting cliff. When the freight had been stowed and the rowers were in their seats, the drummer beat a signal; blocks were removed, cables loosed, and the long craft shot into the sea, — all its paddles smiting the water simultaneously, in time to the rhythm of the *tamtam,* or the *tambou-belai.*

Every Sunday afternoon the Père Kerambrun came on horseback from the neighboring village to catechise the negro children. It was usually in the sugar house that he held his little class, — the broad doors being thrown open front and rear to admit the sea-breeze, and the sun would throw in spidery shadows of palm-heads on the floor. The old priest knew how to teach the little ones in their own tongue, — repeating over and over again each question and answer of the Creole catechism, till the children learned them by heart, and could chant them like a refrain.

— " *Coument ou ka crié fi Bon-Dié?* " the father would ask. (How do you call the Son of the Good-God?)

Then all the child voices, repeating the question and its answer, would shrill in unison: — " *Coument ou ka crié fi Bon-Dié? — Nou ka crié li Zézou-Chri.*"

— " *Et ça y fai pou nou-zautt, fi Bon-Dié-à?* " (And what did He do for us, that Son of the good God?)

— " *Et ça y fai pou nou-zautt, fi Bon-Dié-à? — Li payé pou nou p'allé dans lenfé; li baill toutt sang-li pou ça.*" (He paid for us not to go to hell; He gave all His blood for that.)

— " *Et quilé priè qui pli meillè-adans toutt priè nou ka fai?* " (And what is the best prayer among all the prayers we say?)

— " *Et quilé priè qui pli meillè adans toutt priè nou ka fai? — C'est Note Pè,*

— " pace Zézou-Chri
montré nou li! "

— all would sing together. (It is the *Notre Père,* — the Lord's prayer, — because Jesus Christ showed us how to say it.)

And at the end of each day's task, — when the lambi-shell was blown for the last time to summon all from the fields and the mill buildings, there was the patriarchal spectacle of evening prayer, — an old colonial custom. The master and his overseer, standing by the cross erected before the little village of the plantation, waited for all the hands to assemble. Each man came, bearing the regulation bundle of forage for the animals, and laying the package of herbs before him, removed his hat. Then all, women and men, would kneel down and repeat in unison the *Je vous salue, Marie,* the *Notre Père,* and the Creed, — as the stars thrilled out, and the yellow glow died behind the peaks.

. . . Often, when the nights were clear and warm, the slaves would assemble after the evening meal, to hear stories told by the *libres-de-savane* (old men and women exempted from physical labor), — those curious stories which composed the best part of the unwritten literature of a people forbidden to read. In those days, such oral literature gave delight to adults as well as to children, to *békés* as well as to negroes: it even exerted some visible influence upon colonial character. Every *da* was a story-teller. Her recitals first developed in the white child intrusted to her care the power of fancy, — Africanizing it, perhaps, to a degree that after-education could not totally remove, — creating a love of the droll and the extraordinary. One did not weary of hearing these stories often repeated; — for they were told with an art impossible to describe; and the little songs or refrains belonging to each — sometimes composed of African words, more often of nonsense-rhymes imitating the *bamboula* chants and *caleinda* improvisations, — held a weird charm which great musicians have confessed. And furthermore, in these *contes créoles,* — whether of purely African invention, or merely African adaptation of old-world folk-lore and fable, — the local color is marvellous: there is such a reflection of colonial thought and life as no translation can preserve. The scenes are laid among West Indian woods and hills, or sometimes in the quaintest quarter of an old colonial port. The European cottage of folk-tale becomes the tropical *case* or *ajoupa,* with walls of bamboo and roof of dried cane-leaves; — the Sleeping Beauties could never be discovered in their primeval forest but by some *nègue-marron* or *chasseuchou;* — the Cinderellas and Princesses appear as beautiful half-breed girls, wearing a costume never seen in picture-books; — the fairies of old-world myth are changed into the Bon-Dié or the Virgin Mary; — the Bluebeards and giants turn into *quimboiseurs* and devils; — the devils themselves (except when they yawn to show the fire in their throats) so closely resemble the half-nude *travailleurs,* with their canvas trousers and *mouchouè-fautas* and other details of costume, as not to be readily recognized: it requires keen inspection to detect the diabolic signs, — the red hair, crimson eyes, and horn-roots under the shadowing of the enormous " mule-food hat " or the *chapeau-bacoué.*

Then the Bon-Dié, the " good God," figures as the best and kindest of

old *békés,* — an affable gray planter whose *habitation* lies somewhere in the clouds over the *Montagne Pelée:* you can see his " sheep " and his " *choux-caraïbes* " sometimes in the sky. And the breaker of enchantments is the parish priest, — *Missié labbé,* — who saves pretty naughty girls by passing his stole about their necks. . . . It was at Anse-Marine that Youma found most of the tales she recounted to Mayotte, when the child became old enough to take delight in them.

. . . So the life had been in the valley plantation for a hundred years, with little varying. Doubtless there were shadows in it, — sorrows which never found utterance, — happenings that never had mention in the verses of any *chantrelle,* — days without song or laughter, when the fields were silent. . . . But the tropic sun ever flooded it with dazzling color; and great moons made rose-light over it; and always, always, out of the purple vastness of the sea, a mighty breath blew pure and warm upon it, — the breath of the winds that are called unchanging: *les Vents Alizés.*

III

IN THE morning Youma usually took Mayotte to the river to bathe, — in a clear shallow pool curtained with bamboos, where there were many strange little fish to be seen; — sometimes in the evening, an hour before the sunsetting, she would take her to the sea-beach, to enjoy the breeze and watch the tossing of the surf. But during the heat of the day, the child was permitted to view the wonder-world of the plantation only from the verandas of the house; and the hours seemed long. The cutting of the cane in the neighboring fields to the playing of the drum, — the coming and going of the wagons creaking under their loads of severed stems, — the sharpening of cutlasses at the grindstone, — the sweet smell of the *vesou,* — the rumble of the machines, — the noisy foaming of the little stream turning the wheel of the mill: all the sights and odors and sounds of plantation life filled her with longing to be out amidst them. What tantalized her most was the spectacle of the slave children playing on the grass-plot and about the buildings, — playing funny games in which she longed to join.

— " I wish I was a little negress," she said one day, as she watched them from the porch.

— " Oh! " exclaimed Youma in astonishment . . . " and why? "

— " Because then you would let me run and roll in the sun."

— " But the sun does not hurt little negroes and negresses; and the sun would make you very sick, doudoux. . . ."

— " And that is why I wish I was a little negress."

— " It is not nice to wish that! " declared Youma, severely.

— " Why is it not nice? "

— " Fie! . . . wish to be an ugly little negress! "

— " You are a negress, da, — or nearly the same thing, — and you are not ugly at all. You are beautiful, da; you look like chocolate."

— " Is it not much prettier to look like cream? "

— " No: I like chocolate better than cream . . . tell me a story, da."

It was the only way to keep her quiet. She was four years old, and had developed an extraordinary passion for stories. The story *Montala,* of the wizard orange-tree which grew to heaven; — the story *Mazinlin-guin,* of the proud girl who married a goblin; — the story of the Zombi-bird whose feathers were colored " with the colors of other days," — the bird that sang in the stomachs of those who ate it, and then made itself whole again; — the story of La Belle, whose godmother was the Virgin; — the story of Pié-Chique-à, who learned to play the fiddle after the devil's manner; — the story of Colibri, the Humming-Bird, who once owned the only drum there was in the world, and would not lend it when the Bon-Dié wanted to make a road, although the negroes said they could not work without a drum; — the story of Nanie Rosette, the greedy child, who sat down upon the Devil's Rock and could not get up again, so that her mother had to hire fifty carpenters to build a house over her before midnight; — the wonderful story of Yé, who found an old blind devil roasting snails in the woods, and stole the food out of the old devil's calabash, but was caught by him, and obliged to carry him home and feed him for ever so long . . . these and many more such tales had been told to little Mayotte already, with the effect of stimulating her appetite for more. If these tales did not form the supreme pleasure of her stay at the plantation, they at least enhanced and colored all her other pleasures, — spreading about reality an atmosphere deliciously unreal, — imparting a fantastic personality to lifeless things, — filling the shadows with *zombis,* — giving speech to shrubs and trees and stones . . . even the canes talked to her, *chououa-chououa,* like old whispering Babo, the *libre-de-savane.* Each habitant of the plantation, — from the smallest black child to tall Gabriel, or " Gabou," the *commandeur* of all, — realized for her some figure of the *contes;* and each spot of hill or shore or ravine visited in her morning walks with Youma, furnished her with the scenery for some impossible episode. . . .

— " Mayotte! " exclaimed Youma; — " you know one must not tell stories in the daytime, unless one wants to see *zombis* at night! "

— " No, da! . . . tell me one . . . I am not afraid, da."

— " Oh! the little liar! . . . You are afraid, — very much afraid of *zombis.* And if I tell you a story you will see them to-night."

— " Doudoux-da, no! — tell me one. . . ."

— " You will not wake me up to-night," and tell me you see *zombis?* "

— " No, da, — I promise."

— " Well, then, for this once," — said Youma, uttering the traditional

words which announce that the Creole story-teller is ready, — "*bobonne fois?*"

— "*Toua fois bel conte!*" cried the delighted child. And Youma began: —

Dame Kélément

Long, long ago there lived an old woman who everybody said was a witch, and in league with the devil. And nearly all the bad things said about her were true.

One day a poor little girl lost her way in the woods. After she had walked until she could not walk any more, she sat down and began to cry. She cried for a long, long time.

All about her she could see nothing but trees and lianas; — all the ground was covered with slippery green roots; and the trees were so high, and the lianas so woven between them, that there was very little light. She was lost in the *grands bois* — the great woods which swarm with serpents. . . .

All at once, while she sat there crying, she heard strange sounds quite near her, — sounds of singing and dancing.

She got up and walked towards the sounds. Looking through the trees she saw the same old woman that people used to talk about, riding on a *balai-zo,* and dancing round and round in a ring with ever so many serpents and *crapaud-làde* — great ugly toads. And they were all singing:

Kingué,
Kingué;
Vonvon
Malato,
Vloum-voum!
Jambi,
Kingué,
Tou galé,
Zo galé,
Vloum!

The little girl stood there stupid with fright: she could not even cry any more.

But the old woman had seen the leaves move; and she came with a sort of fire playing all round her, and asked the little girl: —

— "What are you doing in the *razié?*"

— "Mother, I lost my way in the woods." . . .

— "Then, my child, you must come to the house with me. . . . You might undo me, unravel me, destroy me if you had a chance."

The little girl did not understand all that the other woman said; for the wicked old creature was talking about matters that only sorcerers know.

By the time they got to the house, the poor child was very tired: she sat down on a calabash which served the witch for a chair. Then she saw the old woman light two fires on the earth floor, with torch-gum — which

smells like incense. On one fire she placed a big pot full of *manman-chou, camagnioc,* yams, christophines, bananas, devil's egg-plants (*melongène-diabe*), and many herbs the little girl did not known the names of. On the other fire she began to broil some toads, and an earth-lizard, — *zanoli-té.*

At noon the old woman swallowed all that as if it was nothing at all; — then she looked at the little girl, who was nearly dead for hunger, and said to her: —

— "Until you can tell me what name I am called by, you will not get anything to eat." . . . Then she went away, leaving the little girl alone.

The little girl began to weep. Suddenly she felt something touching her. It was a big serpent, — the biggest she had even seen. She was so frightened that she almost died; — then she cried out: —

— "*Oti papa moin? — oti manman moin?*
Latitolé ké mangé moin!"

But the serpent did not do her any harm: he only rubbed his head fondly against her shoulder, and sang: —

— "*Bennemè, bennepè, — tambou belai!*
Yche p'accoutoumé tambou belai!"

The little girl cried out louder than before: —

— "*Oti papa moin? — oti manman moin?*
Latitolé ké mangé moin!"

But the serpent, still rubbing his head fondly against her, answered, singing very softly: —

— "*Bennepè, bennemè, — tambou belai!*
Yche p'accoutoumé tambou belai!"

Then when he saw she had become less afraid, he lifted his head close to her ear, and whispered something.

The moment she heard it she ran out of the house and into the woods again. There she began to ask all the animals she met to tell her the old witch's name.

She asked every four-footed beast; — she asked all the lizards and the birds. But they did not know.

She came to a big river, and she asked all the fishes. The fishes, one after another, made answer to her that they did not know. But the *cirique,* the river crab that is yellow like a plantain, — the cirique knew. The cirique was the only one in the whole world who knew the name. The name was *Dame Kélément.*

. . . Then the child ran back to the house with all her might; her little stomach was paining her so that she felt she could not bear the pain much longer. The old woman was already at the house, scraping some magnioc to make flour and *cassave.* . . . The little girl walked up to her, and said:

— "Give me to eat, *Dame Kélément.*"

Two flashes of fire leaped from the witch's eyes: she gave such a start that she nearly broke her head against the iron-stones that she balanced her pots on.

— "Child! you have got the better of me!" she screamed. "Take everything! — take it, take it! — eat, eat, eat! — all in the house is yours!"

Then she sprang through the door quick as a powder-flash: she seemed to fly through the fields and woods. . . . And she ran straight to the river; — for it was deep under the bed of the river that the Devil had buried the name which he had given her. She stood on the bank, and chanted: —

— "*Loche,* O loche! — was it you who told that my name was Dame Kélément?"

Then the loche, that is black like the black stones of the stream, lifted up its head, and cried: —

— "No, mamma! — no mamma! — it was not I who told that your name was Dame Kélément."

— "*Titiri,* O titiri! — tell me, was it any among you who told that my name was Dame Kélément?"

Then the titiri, the tiny transparent titiri, answered all together, clinging to the stones: —

— "No, mamma! — no, mamma! — it was not I who told that your name was Dame Kélément."

— "*Cribîche,* O cribîche! — was it you who told that my name was Dame Kélément?"

Then the cribîche, the great crawfish of the river, lifted up his head and his claws, and made answer: —

— "No, mamma! — no, mamma! — it was not I who told that your name was Dame Kélément."

— "*Têtart,* O têtart! — was it you who said that my name was Dame Kélément?"

And the têtart, that is gray like the gray rocks of iron to which it holds fast, made answer, saying: —

— "No, mamma! — no, mamma! — it was not I who told them that your name was Dame Kélément."

— "*Dormeur,* O dormeur! — was it you who told that my name was Dame Kélément?"

And the dormeur, the lazy dormeur, that sleeps in the shadow of the rocks, awoke and rose and made answer: —

— "No, mamma! — no, mamma! — it was not I who told them that your name was Dame Kélément."

— "*Matavalé,* O matavalé! — was it you that said my name was Dame Kélément?"

And the matavalé, the shining matavalé, that flashes like copper when the sun touches his scales, opened his mouth and answered: —

— "No, mamma! — no, mamma! — I never said that your name was Dame Kélément!"

— "*Milet!* — *bouc!* — *pisquette!* — *zangui!* — *zhabitant?* — was it any one among you who told that my name was Dame Kélément?"

But they all cried out: —

— "No, no, no, mamma! — none of us ever said that your name was Dame Kélément."

— "*Cirique,* O cirique! — was it you who said my name was Dame Kélément?"

Then the cirique lifted up his eyes and his yellow claws, and screamed: —

— "Yes, you old wretch! — yes, you old witch! — yes, you old malediction! — yes, it was I who said that your name was Dame Kélément!" . . .

The moment she heard those words she stamped on the ground so hard that the Devil heard her, and opened a great hole at her feet: and she leaped into it head-first. And the ground closed over her. Two days after, there grew up from the place a clump of the weed they call *arrête-nègue,* — the plant that is all thorns.

Now while this was happening, the serpent had turned into a man; — for the old witch had changed a man into that serpent. He took the little girl by the hand, and led her to her mother.

But they came back again next day to search the old woman's cabin. They found in it seven casks filled with the bones of dead people; and also ever so much silver and gold, — more than enough to make the little girl rich. When she got married, there was the finest wedding ever seen in this country.

. . . Mayotte's morning visits to the river with Youma had furnished her with material for the imaginative scenery of the last part of this foolish little story, which delighted her so much that she made her nurse repeat it over and over again. She had seen the crawfish show their heads above the pools; she had caught the *titiri* in her little hands; she knew by sight the *loche* and the *têtart,* the *matavalé* and the *zhabitant,* the *dormeur* and the *cirique.* She also knew — by painful experience — the *arrête-nègue.* Dame Kélément, she fancied, must have had a face like old Tanga's when angry; and the little girl who lost her way in the woods must have looked just like a certain little black girl whom Tanga often had to scold, and who used to cry in the most extraordinary way: "*Aïe-yaïe-yaïe-yaïe-yaïe-yaïe!*"

But in the midst of her ecstasy, a faint fear came to her with the recollection of Youma's warning. . . .

— "Da," she asked, timidly, "I will not see zombis to-night, will I?"

— "Ah! you must not ask me to tell stories in the daytime any more," said Youma, guardedly.

— "But tell me, I won't see them to-night, — will I?"

— "If you see them," replied Youma, without mercy, "call me! — I will make them go away."

IV

YOUMA was alone in the house that night with the child; for M. Desrivières had ridden over to Sainte-Marie, and the servants occupied an adjoining building. . . . She was roused from her sleep by hearing the child cry: —

— "*Da, oh da! — moin pè!*"

The tiny lamp left burning before the images of the saints had gone out; — little Mayotte was afraid.

— "*Pa pè,*" — called Youma, quickly rising to caress her, — "*mi da-ou, chè.*"

— "Oh! there is Something in the room, *da!*" said the child. She had heard stealthy sounds.

— "No, doudoux; you have been dreaming. . . . Da will light the lamp for you."

She felt for the matches on the little night-table, — could not find them, — remembered she had left them in the adjoining salon, — moved towards the door; — and her foot suddenly descended upon something that sent a cold shock through all her blood, — something clammy and chill, that lived! Instantly she threw all the weight of her lithe strong body upon that foot — the left: she never could tell why; — perhaps the impulse was instinctive. Under her naked sole the frigid life she strove to crush writhed with a sudden power that nearly threw her down; and in the same moment she felt something wind round her ankle, over her knee, wrapping the flesh from heel to thigh with bruising force . . . the folds of a serpent!

— "*Tambou!*" she muttered between her teeth, — and hardened her muscles against the tightening coil, and strengthened the pressure of her foot upon the unseen enemy. . . . The foot of the half-breed, never deformed by shoes, retains prehensile power, — grasps like a hand; — the creature writhed in vain to escape. Already the cold terror had passed; and Youma felt only the calm anger of resolve: hers was one of those semi-savage natures wherein fear rarely lives beyond the first moment of nervous surprise. She called softly to the little one.

— "*Ti doudoux?*"

— "Da?"

— "Do not move till I tell you: stay in bed; there is a *bête* in the room."

— "*Aïe, aïe!*" sobbed the frightened child, — "what is it, da?"

— "Do not be afraid, cocotte: I am holding it, and it cannot bite you, unless you get up. I am going to call for Gabriel: do not stir, dear."

And Youma called, with all the power of her clear voice:

— "*Sucou! — sucou! Eh! Gabou!*" . . .

— "What is it? — what is it, da?" sobbed the little girl.

— " Do not cry like that, or I will get angry! How can I see what it is in the dark? " . . .

She called again and again for aid. . . . *Bon-Dié!* how powerful the creature was! — the pressure of the coil became a numbing pain. Her strength was already beginning to weaken under the obstinate, icy, ever-increasing construction. What if the cramp should come to help it? . . . Or was it the entering of venom into her blood that made those strange tinglings and tremblings? . . . She had not felt herself stricken; — but only the month before a plantation-hand had been bitten in the dark without feeling it; and they could not save him. . . . "*Eh! Gabou!*" . . . Even the servants in the pavilion seemed to sleep like dead. And if the child should leave the bed in spite of her warning? . . .

— " Oh! they are coming, da! " cried Mayotte. " Gabou is coming! " She had seen the flash of his lantern through the slatted shutters. " But the door is locked, da! "

— " Stay in bed, Mayotte! — if you move it will bite you! " The salon filled with voices and sound of feet; then there was a pushing at the bedroom door.

— " It is locked," called Youma; — " break it! — smash it in! — I cannot move! "

. . . A crash! — the room filled with a flare of lanterns; and Youma saw that the livid throat was under her foot; — the hideous head vainly strained at her heel.

"*Pa bouèné piess!*" cried the voice of the *commandeur*. " Do not stir for your life, my girl! Keep still for your life! Stay just as you are! "

She stood like a bronze. Gabriel was beside her, his naked cutlass in his hand. . . . *Quim fò! quim fò! — pas bouèné piess, piess, piess!*" . . . Then she saw the gleam of his steel pass, and the severed head leap to the wainscoting, where it fell gaping, — the eyes still burning like sparks of charcoal. In the same moment the coil loosed and dropped, and Youma lifted her foot; — the body of the reptile lashed the planking, twisted, strove to crawl as if to join the head; — again and again the cutlass descended, and each lopped fragment nevertheless moved.

— " Are you hurt, my daughter? " a kind voice asked, — the voice of M. Desrivières: he had seen it all.

— "*Pa couè maîte,*" she answered, looking at her foot. But she did not know. He led her to a chair, knelt down and began the examination himself; while Mayotte climbed to Youma's neck, clinging and kissing and crying: " Did he bite you, dear da? — did he bite you? " . . . " No, doudoux; no, cocotte: do not be afraid! " She was telling the truth unawares: the serpent had never been able to use his fangs; but the seaming of his coil remained upon the smooth red skin as if branded. . . . Gabriel had dropped his cutlass and detached the long *mouchoir-fautas* about his waist to make a ligature: he was the *panseur* of the plantation.

— "Never mind, my son," said M. Desrivières: "she has not been bitten."

Gabriel stood dumb for astonishment.

Meanwhile the room had filled with armed plantation-hands, and a clamor of exclamations: . . . "*Die Seignè! qui sépent!*" . . . "*Mi tête-là ka lè modé toujou!*" . . . "*C'est guiabe mênm!*" . . . "*Moceauà ka rimié pou yo joinne!*" . . . "*Aie! Youma tchoque! — ouill papa!*" . . . And a serpent nearly six feet in length! No one had ever heard of such a feat before. When Youma told how it happened, — very simply and very calmly, — there was a dead hush of admiration. It was first broken by the rough basso of the commandeur, exclaiming: — "*Ouaill! ou brave, mafi! — foute! ou sévè!*" . . . "*Severe,*" the negro's strongest adjective to qualify courage, retains in his patois something of quaint and reverential meaning, — something of that sense which survives in our own modern application of it to art and truth: the Creole now rarely uses it except in irony, but Gabriel uttered it with unconscious exquisiteness; and M. Desrivières himself applauded.

— "*Doudoux-da-moin!*" cried Mayotte, smothering her nurse with caresses; — "*ti cocotte-da-moin! . . . Mais bo y, papoute! — bo y!*" she pleaded, to M. Desrivières. He smiled and kissed Youma's forehead.

— "And it was all my fault," declared Mayotte, beginning to sob again: "I made her tell me stories in the daytime."

But that serpent was no zombi: they found his trail and followed it to a hole which some rat had gnawed in the planking of the salon, under a sideboard.

V

From that night Youma became the object of a sort of cult at Anse-Marine; — there is no quality the black admires so much as physical courage. The entire *atelier* began to evince for her a respect almost fetichistic. The girl's heroism had conquered any petty dislikes which her city manners and natural reserve might have provoked, and had hopelessly crushed the small jealousies of house-servants who imagined themselves supplanted by a stranger in the master's home. These now only sought to obtain her good-will, to win her smile; — the plantation declared itself proud of her, — boasted of her prowess to the slaves of neighboring estates; — the hands saluted her when she passed, as if she were a mistress; and the improvisors of the *caleinda* chants celebrated her praises in their *belai*. Even the overseer, M. de Comislles, though a rigid disciplinarian, no longer addressed her as *mafi*, "my daughter," but as *Manzell*, — Manzell Youma.

But what secretly pleased her above all was the attention of Gabriel. Gabriel appeared to have taken a sudden fancy to her. Although the busiest man on the estate, he found time to show his friendship by little kindnesses

and courtesies of which one could scarcely have believed so rude a nature capable. He invented opportunities to meet her during the midday respite from labor, and of evenings, — before or after making his nightly round to see that all the regulations of cleanliness and good order had been obeyed in every cabin, — that clothing had been washed, and refuse removed. His visits were necessarily brief; — they were also strangely silent: he rarely spoke, except when asked a direct question, or when teased by Mayotte into taking her on his knees and answering her prattle. More usually he would simply seat himself on the veranda close to Youma's rocking-chair, and listen to her chat with the child, or her story-telling, — seldom even turning his face towards her, but seeming to watch the noisy life of the *cases*. But almost at every visit he would bring something for the child, — knowing she would share it with her da, — some gift of fruit gathered in his own garden: such as a bunch of figues, which are tiny dessert bananas scarcely two inches long; — or a *zabricot* (tropical apricot), — that singular fruit the ancient Haytians held sacred as the food of ghosts, — a colossal plum, as large as the largest turnip, with musky vermilion flesh, and a kernel big as a duck's egg; — or an odorous branch cut from a *zorange-macaque* tree, heavy with mandarines; — or a *fouitt-defendu,* — the same, according to Creole tradition, which Eve was tempted by the Serpent to eat, — a sort of huge orange larger than a pumpkin, with a luscious pink pulp. . . . One day, — the day of Mayotte's *fête,* — Gabriel brought a very pretty present: a basket he had himself woven of bamboo strips and liana stems, filled with samples of almost everything the estate produced. There was a beautiful little sugar-loaf, — a package of *batons-caco,* or sticks of chocolate, — a little *coui,* or half-calabash, filled with brown sugar, — a can of refined syrup, — a *painmi,* or boiled-maize cake, sweetened, and wrapped in a piece of balisier leaf tied with a *ti-liane-razié;* — some *tablettes* of grated cocoa candied in liquid sugar; — and a nice bundle of Chambéry cane, tied with a cane leaf. . . . Another day, when Youma had taken the child to the river for her morning bath, she found there, fixed upon the bank beside a little pool, a broad and handsome rustic bench, built of the long tough stems of the *pommier-rose,* with split bamboos for the back and the seat: Gabriel had made it, working at night, and had carried it to the river before daybreak, as a surprise for Youma.

. . . Silent as Gabriel's visits were, they began to exert an influence on Youma. She found in them an unfamiliar pleasure, — became accustomed to look for them with unconscious eagerness; — even felt vaguely unhappy when he did not come. And yet, after having failed to see him for a longer time than usual, she never asked what had prevented his visit; — she would not have confessed, even to herself, that she feared his indifference. He, on the other hand, never offered an explanation. The two strange natures comprehended each other without speech, — drew and dominated each other in a dumb, primitive, half-savage way.

. . . He brought one afternoon a fine *sapota,* — that fruit in whose smooth flushed swarthy skin Creole fancy finds the semblance of half-breed beauty. Within its flat black seed, between the two halves of the kernel, lies a pellicle, — creamy, fragile, and shaped like a heart, — which it requires dexterity to remove without breaking. Lovers challenge each other to do it as a test of affection.

— "Mayotte," said Youma, after they had eaten the fruit together, — "I want to see if you love me." . . . She cracked the flinty shell of a seed between her teeth, — then tried to remove the pellicle, and broke it.

— "Oh, da!" cried the child, "it is not true! — you know I love you." . . .

— "Piess, piess!" declared Youma, teasing her; — "you do not love me one bit!"

But Gabriel asked for a seed, and she gave him one. Rude and hard as his fingers were, he took out the little heart intact, and gave it to Mayotte.

— "*Ou ouè!*" he said, maliciously; — "*da ou ainmein moin passé ou!*" (Your da loves me better than you.)

— "It is not true! — no, *cocotte!*" Youma assured the child. But she did not feel sure of what she said.

. . . When the cane-cutting season was over, Gabriel asked and obtained leave to go to La Trinité one holiday morning. He returned at evening, later than the hour at which he was accustomed to find the young *capresse* on the veranda; but she was still there. Seeing him approach, she rose with the child asleep in her arms, and put her finger to her lips.

"*Quimbé!*" whispered Gabriel, slipping into Youma's hand something flat and square, wrapped in tissue-paper: then, without another word, he strode away to his quarters.

When Mayotte had been put to bed, Youma looked at the packet. . . . A little card-board box: within it, upon a layer of pink cotton, shone two large light circles of plain gold, — barbaric ear-rings such as are only made by colonial goldsmiths, but well suited to the costume and bronze skin of the race of color. . . . Youma already possessed far finer jewelry; but Gabriel had walked thirty kilometres for these.

He smiled as he passed by her window in the morning and saw them shimmering in her ears. Her acceptance of the gift signified assent to a question unspoken, — the question which civilized men most fear to ask, but which the Creole slave could ask without words.

VI

"WHAT is it, my son?" said M. Desrivières, as Gabriel, who had asked to speak with him alone, stood nervously twirling a great straw hat between his fingers.

"*Maîte,*" he began, shyly, — "*moin ainmein ti bonne ou.*" . . .

"Youma?" queried M. Desrivières in surprise.

"*Mais oui, maîte.*"

"Is Youma willing to marry you?"

"*Mais oui, maîte.*"

For a few moments M. Desrivières could make no reply: the possibility of a union between the two had never occurred to him, and Gabriel's revelation almost shocked him. The *commandeur* was certainly one of the finest physical men of his race, — young, industrious, intelligent; but he would make a rough mate indeed for a girl brought up as Youma had been. She was also a slave, without education; but she had received a domestic training that gave her a marked superiority above her class, and she had moral qualities more delicate by far than those of Gabriel. . . . Above all, she had been the companion of Aimée's childhood, and afterwards her friend rather than her servant: the influence of Aimée had done much for her; — something of Aimée's manner, and of Aimée's thought, had become a part of her own. . . . No; Madame Peyronnette would never hear of such a union: the mere idea of it would revolt her like a brutality!

— "But, Gabriel," he answered at last, "Youma does not belong to me. She belongs to my mother-in-law."

— "Master, I know she belongs to Madame Peyronnette," said Gabriel, making the rim of his *chapeau-bacouè* revolve still more quickly; — "but I thought you would like to do something for me."

The planter smiled at the suggestion. . . . He had often expressed to Gabriel the wish to see him marry, — had even promised to give him a handsome wedding when he should have made a choice. But Gabriel seemed in no haste to choose. Then it became known that, while he remained indifferent to the girls of Anse-Marine, he was in the habit of making furtive visits to a neighboring estate; and M. Desrivières himself went there to discover the object of those visits. He found it in the person of a handsome *griffone;* and, wishing to give Gabriel an agreeable surprise, bought the girl for fifteen hundred francs, and brought her back with him. But from the day that she belonged to the plantation, Gabriel paid no further attention to her whatever. Secretly, he resented his master's intermeddling in the matter; and nevertheless, in spite of that episode, it now seemed to him quite natural to beg M. Desrivières to buy Youma for him. . . . The planter, however, felt no anger; — the incident rather amused him. He valued Gabriel highly, and understood him well: — a nature impatient of control, but capable of exerting it to an extraordinary degree. As a *commandeur* he was inestimable; as a *travailleur* he would have been almost impossible to manage. His former owner, a *petit blanc,* had been glad to sell him, with the frank assurance that he was "sullen, incorrigible, and dangerous." De Comislles, who purchased him, knew it was a case of "fine stock" unappreciated; and often boasted of the bargain he had made.

— "I cannot buy her for you, my son," said M. Desrivières kindly. "Youma is not for sale. Madame Peyronnette will not sell her at any price, — even to me. . . . I am going to the city to-morrow, and will ask my mother-in-law if she will let Youma marry you: that is all I can do."

Gabriel ceased to twirl his hat: he stood silent for a little while, with his eyes cast down, and a decidedly sinister expression in his face. He had never thought that Youma's fate might not be decided even by M. Desrivières's wealth and influence: a suspicion that the planter's assurances were false, momentarily darkened his thoughts. Then he looked up, bowed to M. Desrivières, and with a hoarsely muttered "*Mèçi, maîte,*" withdrew.

— "It is Youma who will suffer the most," thought M. Desrivières.

VII

MADAME PEYRONNETTE'S decision was just what M. Desrivières had expected. She was even more astonished by Youma's choice than he had been, — could only attribute it to a fascination purely physical, or, as she termed it, animal: the one peril among all others that she had especially feared for Youma. She even reproached her son-in-law, — held him responsible for the affair; and finally insisted upon Youma's immediate return to the city. She did not wish that another should be Mayotte's nurse; but whether Mayotte remained at Anse-Marine or not, Youma should return. It was time at all events that the child should begin to learn something more important than sucking sugar-cane and playing with little negroes; — besides, she had become quite strong, and the city was exceptionally healthy. Youma might continue to live with the Desrivières at the Fort; but a girl innocent enough to become enamoured of the first common negro who made love to her, needed looking after; and Madame Peyronnette intended to make sure that no more such things should happen. . . . M. Desrivières offered no opposition to his mother-in-law's wishes; he announced his intention to return to town himself as soon as possible, and bring Mayotte and her nurse with him.

. . . To Youma this decision brought a shock of pain that stupefied her too much for tears. Then, with the instinctive, automatic resentment that sudden pain provokes, came to her also for the first time the full keen sense of the fact that she was a slave, — helpless to resist the will that struck her. Every disappointment she had ever known, — each constraint, reprimand, refusal, suppression of an impulse, every petty pang she had suffered since a child, — crowded to her memory, scorched it, blackened it; filled her with the delusion that she had been unhappy all her life, and with a hot secret anger against the long injustice imagined, breaking down her good sense, and her trained habit of cheerful resignation. In that instant she almost hated her godmother, hated M. Desrivières, hated everybody . . . except Gabriel. At his advent into her life, something long held in subjection within

her, — something like a darker passionate second soul, full of strange impulses and mysterious emotions, — had risen to meet him, bursting its bonds, and winning mastery at last: the nature of the savage race whose blood dominated in her veins.

Its earlier rebellions had produced no graver result than occasional secret fits of melancholy, — beginning after Aimée's departure to school, when Youma was first taken into an existence high-hedged about in those days with formalities extraordinary. Except during the evenings of a brief theatrical season, and the occasion of a select ball, the Creole ladies remained almost cloistered in their homes from Sunday to Sunday, scarcely leaving their apartments except to go to church, — never entering a store under any circumstances, and having even the smallest details of their shopping done for them by slaves. Enervated by a climate that would probably have exterminated the European element within a few generations but for the constant infusion of fresh blood from abroad, the white women of the colonies could adapt themselves without pain to this life of cool and elegant seclusion. But Youma was of the race of sun-lovers. The very privileges accorded her, the very training given to her as a sort of adopted child, had tended rather to contract her natural life than to expand it. In the country she had found larger opportunities for out-door enjoyment, and freedom from formal restraints of a certain kind; but even in the country her existence was confined by her duty as a nurse, — compressed into the small sphere of a child's requirements. Youma was too young to be a *da.* For the *da* there were no pleasures. The responsibilities of such a place, — requiring nothing less than absolute self-sacrifice, — were confided as a rule only to slaves who had been mothers, who had fulfilled the natural destiny of woman. But Youma had scarcely ceased to be a child, when she found herself again sentenced to act, think, and speak as a child, — for the sake of a child not her own. Her magnificent youth dumbly protested against this perpetual constraint. Despite that sense of personal dignity Madame Peyronnette had spared no pains to cultivate in her, — the feeling of having social superiority among her class, — she sometimes found herself envying the lot of others who would have gladly changed places with her: the girls who travelled singing over the sunny mountain roads, the negresses working the fields, chanting *belai* to the tapping of the *ka.* Youma felt a painful pleasure in watching them. She suffered so much from the weariness of physical inaction; — she was so tired of living in shadow, of resting in rocking-chairs, of talking baby talk, — just as in other years she had been tired of dwelling behind closed shutters, and broidering and sewing in a half-light, and hearing conversations which she could not understand. Still, at such moments, she had judged herself ungrateful, — almost wicked, — and battled with her discontent, and conquered it, — until Gabriel came.

Gabriel! . . . He seemed to open to her a new world full of all that her being longed for, — light, and joy, and melody: he appeared to her in some

way blended with the freedom of air and sun, of river and sea, — fresh scents of wood and field, — the long blue shadows of morning, — the rose-light of tropical moonrise, — and the songs of the *chantrelles*, — and the merriment of dances under the cocoa-palms to the throbbing thunder of the drums. Gabriel, so calm, so strong, so true! her man of all men, made for her by the Bon-Dié; — Gabriel, who, though a slave, could compel the esteem of his master; — Gabriel, for whom she prayed each night, and laid before the Virgin's image her little offering of wild flowers; — Gabriel, with whom she would be so happy, even in the poorest of *ajoupas*, — for whom she would gladly give liberty if she had it, or even her life if it could do him service. . . . She wished to be beautiful — and they said she was beautiful (*yon bel-bois*, like a shapely tree, like a young palm) — only for his sake. . . . And they were going to take him from her, — pretending that he was not good enough for her (as if *they* could know!), — because they wanted her to remain with them always, to suffer for them always, to live in darkness and silence, like a *manicou*. And they had the power to be cruel to her, to take him away from her! The world was all wrong, — wrong at least for her. Whomsoever she loved was taken from her; first her mother, Douceline; then Aimée Desrivières; — now Gabriel.

. . . It was the morning after his arrival from the city that M. Desrivières had called her aside to tell her: she had just returned from the river with Mayotte, after giving the child her morning bath. He had spoken kindly, but very frankly, — in a way that left no hope possible.

For a long time she sat speechless and motionless in her room: then, obeying the child's wish, went out with her upon the veranda. The day was exquisitely clear, with a tepid wind from the sea. Above her, on the nearer side of the valley, sounded the mellow booming of a *tambou-belai*, and a chorus of African song. A troop of field-hands were making a new path to the summit of one of the mornes; the old path having been washed away by recent heavy rains. The overseer had surveyed the course for it, marked out the zigzag with stretched cords; and the workers were slowly descending in a double line, — all singing, — all the hoes and rammers keeping time to the drum rhythm. Sometimes the men would throw up their hoes in the air and catch them again, or exchange them in a fling, without losing the measure of the movement. And there was a girl, — young Chrysaline, — carrying a tray with tin cups, *dobannes* of water, and a pitcher of liquor; — serving drink all round at intervals; for the work was hot. . . . Youma looked for a tall figure in blue cotton shirt and white canvas trousers at the head of the column. But Gabriel was not visible. Another was acting in his place, overseeing the task, and keeping a watch for serpents, — a black man, Marius.

Only three days more; and she would have to leave Anse-Marine, — would see Gabriel no more. . . . They were going to return to the dull hot

city in the dullest and hottest month of the year. . . . Did Gabriel know? . . . Or was it because he knew, that she did not see him among the workers? She felt that if he knew, he would contrive some chance to speak with her. . . .

Even as this feeling came, Gabriel appeared before the house, — made her a sign to leave the child and come to him.

He laid his hand caressingly upon her shoulder, and whispered: —

" The master told me all this morning . . . he is going to take you away from us?"

" Yes," she answered, sadly; — " we are going back to the city."

" When? "

" Monday coming."

" It is only Thursday," he said, with a peculiar smile. . . . " Doudoux, you know that once they have you back in the city again, they will never let you see me, never! — yes, you know it! "

" But, Gabriel," she answered, with a choking in her voice, — hurt by the tone of pleading in his words: " what can I do? — you know there is not any way."

" There *is* a way," he interrupted, almost roughly.

Wondering, she looked at him, — a new vague hope dawning in her large eyes.

" There is a way, my girl," he repeated, " if you are brave. Look! "

He pointed beyond the valley, over the sea to the north-east, where loomed a shape of phantasmal beauty, — a vision only seen in fairest weather. Out of the purpling ocean circle, the silhouette of Dominica towered against the amethystine day, — with crown of ghostly violet peaks, and clouds far curled upon them, like luminous wool of gold.

" Doudoux, in one night! " . . . he whispered, watching her face.

She caught his meaning. . . . Freedom for the slave who could set his foot on British soil!

" Gabriel! " called the voice of M. de Comislles.

" Eti! " he shouted in answer. . . . " Think about it, my girl, — *chongé, chongé bien chè! "*

" Gabriel! " again cried the voice of the overseer.

" Ka vini! " called Gabriel, running towards the summons.

. . . She returned to her accustomed place on the veranda, where Mayotte was playing with a black kitten. She scarcely heard the child's laughter, and joyous callings to her to look when the little animal performed some droll prank, — answered mechanically as if half awake: her gaze continued fixed upon the shining apparition in the horizon, that tempted her will with its vapory loveliness. Slowly, while she gazed, it took diaphanous pallor, — began to fade into the vast light. Then, as the sun

climbed higher, it passed mysteriously away: there remained only the clear-colored circling sea, the rounded spotlessness of the summer heaven. . . . But the luminous violet memory of it lingered with her, — burned into her thought.

She did not see Gabriel again that day. He seemed to avoid her purposely, — to give her time to reflect.

VIII

. . . NEVER a doubt of Gabriel's ability to carry out his project entered her mind: the possibilities of pursuit and capture, of encountering a *rafale* in that awful channel — or even worse; for the hurricane season had set in, — gave her little concern. What danger could she not brave for his sake? — anywhere with him she would feel secure.

But slowly the exaltation of her fancy began to calm. The totally unexpected suggestion of a means to frustrate the will of others, and to win all that she desired, had cooled the passion of her disappointment; and, with its cooling, her natural power of just reflection gradually returned. Then she felt afraid, — afraid of something in herself that she knew was wrong. For even in the first movement, the proposal of Gabriel had vaguely smitten her conscience, — startled her moral sense before she could weigh, however hastily, the results of abandoning her friends, her birthplace, her duties, — of declassing herself forever, — of losing the esteem of all who put trust in her. But now as she thought, — seriously thought, — she knew that a shame rose and tingled in her face. . . .

No — no — no! — it was not true that her life had been all unhappiness. She began to recall, — in shining soft succession, — many delightful days. Days of her childhood, above all, — with Aimée, when they played together in the great court of Madame Peyronnette's house in the high street — the beautiful sunny court with its huge-leaved queer plants and potted palms, — where the view of the splendid bay lay all open in blue light from the Grosse-Roche to Fond Corré; — with ships coming and going over the horizon, or drowsily swaying at anchor, — the court where each morning they used to feed the *zanolis,* the little green lizards of the *tonnelle,* who flashed down from the green vault of climbing vines to eat the crumbs thrown them! . . . Aimée, who shared all things with her, — even when a tall young lady. Aimée, whose dying hand clasped hers with such loving trust, — whose dying lips had whispered: — "*Youma, O Youma! you will love my child? — Youma, you will never leave her, whatever happens, while she is little? — promise, dear Youma!*" . . . And she had — promised. . . .

She saw again the face of Madame Peyronnette, smiling under its bands of silver hair, — smiling as when Youma felt her cheek stroked by the fine white hand that glimmered with rings; — as when she heard the gentle

assurance: — "You are my daughter, too, child — my beautiful dark daughter-in-God! You must be happy; — I want you to be happy! . . . And had she not really tried to make her so, — contrived for her, — planned for her, — expended much for her sake, that she might never have the right to envy others of her class? . . . And Youma thought of all the gifts, the New-Year surprises, — the perpetual comfort. She had always had a room apart, — a room overlooking the *tonnelle* with its vines and pommes-de-liane, where the humming-birds circled in gleams of crimson and emerald, — a little chamber full of sea-wind: she had never been allowed to lie on a simple mattress unrolled upon the floor, like a common domestic.

For Aimée's sake she had found scarcely less consideration in her second home, from Madame Desrivières and her son. And ever since Aimée's death, the kindness of M. Desrivières had been that of a father. He had trusted her to such a degree that he had never noticed Gabriel's visits.

. . . What would all these think of her? To whom did she owe most? — to them, whom she had known so long, and the kind lady who had brought her up with her own child, after having named her at the baptismal font; or to Gabriel, whom she had known only for one season? . . . Ah! never, — not even for his sake, could she be false to them! — the good God would never forgive her! . . . But Gabriel did not know: if he knew, he could not ask her to fly with him.

. . . Once more the darker side of her nature was quelled, — sank back sobbing to its old place. The cruel pain remained: but she lay down to rest that night with a strong resolve to seek Gabriel as soon as possible, and to say *No.*

And nevertheless her heart sank a little next morning, when Gabriel, striding by as she was taking the child to the river, said, in a low, hurried tone: —

— " Go to the beach this evening, at four o'clock. I will see you there. The gommier leaves for La Trinité with a cargo."

Then he was gone, before she could answer a word.

IX

A STRANGE coast is that on which the valley of Anse-Marine opens, — a coast of fantastic capes and rocks with sinister appellations, in which the Devil's name is sometimes mentioned. Black iron ore forms the high cliffs; but countless creepers tapestry them, and lianas everywhere dangle down to meet the shore fringe of *patate-bò-lanmè,* — the vivid green sea-vine, — crawling over a sand black as powdered jet. (Its thick leaves when broken show a sap white as milk; and it bears a beautiful carmine cup-

shaped flower.) The waves are very long, very heavy; — they crumble over with a crash that deafens, and ghostly uptossings of foam as of waving hands. The sea is never quiet there: north and south the *falaises* perpetually loom through a haze of tepid spray, — rising like smoke to the sun. . . . There is a Creole legend that it was not so in other years; — that a priest, mocked by fishermen, shook his black robe against the sea, and cursed it with the curse of eternal unrest. And the fishing-boats and the spread nets rotted on the beach, while men vainly waited for the sea to calm. . . . The foam-line never vanishes through the year: it only broadens or narrows, as the surf becomes, under the pressure of the trade-winds, more or less dangerous. Sometimes it whitens far up the river mouths, leaps to the summit of the cliffs, and shakes all the land, — though there is scarcely a breeze, and not one cloud in the sky. At such a time you will see that far out, even to the horizon, the flood is blue as lapis lazuli, and smooth as a mirror: the thunder and the foaming do not extend beyond the coast. That is a *raz-de-marée,* — a *raz-de-marée du fond:* the sea swinging from the depths, — rocking from the bottom. This spectacle may endure two, three, four days; and then cease mysteriously as it began.

For the *travailleur* of the eastern plantations, the only barrier between slavery and freedom was this wild sea. There were but few boats on the coast; — north of La Trinité, there were but few points from which a boat could be safely launched. But at Anse-Marine there was one such place, — a sort of natural cove in a promontory projecting into deep water from the southern end of the valley-opening, and curving so as to give a lee side. It was thence the gommier was launched to the sound of the drum; and a little boat was also kept there in a shed, — the master's private boat, — seldom used. This Gabriel knew how to handle well.

. . . Before the hour appointed Youma took Mayotte to the beach: the great heat of the day was spent, the strong wind was almost cool, and the cliffs were throwing shadow. A visit to this shore was a delight for the child. There were no pretty little shells like those thrown up by the tide at the Grosse-Roche of Saint Pierre, and the surf was too strong to permit of her wading, as she would have wished to do. But it was a joy to see it tumbling and flashing; and the black sand was full of funny yellow hairy-legged crabs, and little sea-roaches — *ravett-lanmè* — which had spades in their tails, to dig holes with; — and sometimes one might meet a baby turtle, just out of the egg, making its way to the water.

The children came soon after, — black and yellow, brown and red, — all in charge of Tanga's daughters, Zoune and Gambi, to see the gommier go out. The little ones were not allowed to venture fairly into the water for fear of accidents; but they could gambol on the skirts of the surf to their hearts' content. They screamed and leaped all together whenever a big wave would chase up the sand, whirling and hissing about their little bare feet.

Then the wagons appeared, moving along the cliff road, with their loads of rum and sugar: it was hard work for the mules, strong and fat as they were. . . . Youma heard Gabriel's voice urging them on, — helping the drivers.

Then a slim brown boy, naked as a bronze, appeared on horseback, — coming down to the beach at a gallop, riding without a saddle. It was the overseer's little groom, going to give M. de Comislles's horse a bath in the surf. The boy was scarcely more than a child, and the animal, — a black Porto Rico stallion, — very spirited; but the two knew each other. As the surf reached the horse's knees, the lad leaped down, and began to wash him. Then an immense breaker bursting, whelmed both almost out of sight in a quivering woolly sheet of foam. The horse seemed to like it, never moved: there was no fear for the boy, — he could swim like a *couliou.* He played about the horse, patted him, hugged his neck, threw water on him: when a heavy breaker came he would cling to the stallion's mane.

" *Yo kallé! yo kallé!* " cried the children at last, as a drum-roll vibrated from the launching-place: the freight had been stowed, the crew were in their places, the *tambouyé* on his perch. It was the signal to let go — " *lagué toutt* "; and all eyes turned to see the gommier rush into the water; and everybody shouted as she reached it safely, pitched, steadied again with the first plunge of the paddles, and started on her journey, to the merry measure of *Madame lèzhabitant.* The children stopped their play to watch; — and from the cliffs sounded a clapping of hands, and women's laughter, and jocose screams of *adié,* — as the long craft shot away to the open, — till the chant of the crew was lost in the voice of the surf, and the faces ceased to be distinguishable. Even then, for a minute or two the booming of the drum could be heard; but the gommier soon rounded the long point, and passed out of sight, making south. . . . The event of the day was over.

Tanga's daughters gathered their little flock, and left the beach; — the boy in the surf leaped to the horse's back, turned him, and off they went up the valley at a gallop, — shining like a group in metal, — to dry themselves in wind and sun; — the lookers-on disappeared from the cliffs; — and the empty wagons turned back rumbling to the plantation. . . . Youma still lingered, to Mayotte's great satisfaction. The child had found a cocoa-nut — empty, shrunken, and blackened by long pitching about in the waves. She amused herself by rolling it into the surf, and seeing it cast out again — always at some distance from where it had been thrown in; — and this so much diverted her that she did not notice Gabriel hastening towards them. . . . But Youma advanced to meet him.

— " *Doudoux-moin,*" he said, breathing quickly with the hurry of his coming, as he took her hand in both his own, — " listen well to what I am going to tell you. . . . The gommier has gone; — there will be no boat to pursue us: we can go tonight if you will be brave. . . . To-morrow we can be free, — to-morrow morning, doudoux! "

— "Ah! Gabriel . . ." she began. But he would not hear her: he spoke on so earnestly, so rapidly, that she could not interrupt him, telling her his hopes, his plans. He had a little money, — knew what he was going to do. They would buy a little place in the country, — (it was a beautiful country there, and everything was cheap, and there were no serpents!) — he could build a little house himself, — plant a fruit garden. . . . The master's boat was ready for their escape; — wind and sea were in their favor; — there would be no moon till after midnight; — there was nothing to fear. And with the coming sunrise they would be free.

He spoke of his love for her, — of the life they might live together, — of liberty as he imagined it, — of their children who would be free, — with naïve power of persuasion, and with a fulness that revealed how earnestly and long he had nourished his dream, — vividly imaging his thought by those strange Creòle words which, like tropic lizards, change color with position. Not until he had said all that was in his heart, could Youma answer him, with the tears running down her cheeks: —

— "Oh! Gabriel! I cannot go! — do not tell me any more; I cannot go!" . . .

Then she stopped, — struck dumb by the sudden change in his face. As he dropped her hand, there was an expression in his eyes she had never seen before. But he did not fix them upon her: he turned, and folded his arms, and stared at the sea.

— "Doudoux," she went on, — "you would not let me speak. . . . I did as you told me; — I thought it all over, — over and over again. And the more I thought about it, the more I felt it could not be. . . . And you would not give me a chance to tell you," — she repeated, pleadingly, — touching his arm, — trying to draw his look again.

But he did not answer, — stood rigid and grim as the black rock behind him, — looking always to the horizon, where the place of his hope had been, — free Dominica, with its snakeless valleys, — all viewless now, veiled by the vapors of evening.

— "Gabriel," she persisted, caressingly, — "listen, doudoux." . . .

— "Ah! you will not come?" he said at last, — "you will not come?" . . . There was almost a menace in his voice, as he turned the wrath of his eyes upon her.

— "I cannot go, doudoux," she repeated with gentle force. "Listen to me . . . you know I love you?"

— "*Pa pàlé ça! — pa lapeine!*" he answered, bitterly. . . . "I offer you all that I have; — it is not enough for you. . . . I give you the chance to be free with me, and you tell me you prefer to remain a slave."

— "Oh, Gabriel!" she sobbed, — "can you reproach me like that? You know in your heart whether I love you."

— "Then you are afraid, — afraid of the sea?"

— "It is not that." . . .

— "*Ouill, mafi!* — I thought you brave!"

— "Gabriel," she cried, almost fiercely, "I am not afraid of anything except of doing wrong, — I am afraid of the Bon-Dié only."

— "*Qui Bon-Dié ça?*" he scoffed, — "the Bon-Dié of the békés? — the Bon-Dié of Manm-Peyronnette?"

— "You shall not talk that kind of talk to me, Gabriel!" she exclaimed, with eyes blazing, — "it brings bad luck!"

He looked at her in surprise at the sudden change in her manner, as, for the first time, her will rose to match his own.

— "*Ça ka pòté malhè, ou tenne?*" she repeated, meeting his gaze and mastering it. He turned sullenly to the sea again, and let her speak, — listening restively to her passionate explanation. . . . Afraid? — how little he knew her heart! But she had forgotten, because of him, what it was wicked to forget. She had done wrong even to think of going with him, — forsaking the godmother who had brought her up from an infant, — deserting the mistress who had cared for her like a daughter, — abandoning the child confided to her care, the child of Madame Desrivières, the child who loved her so much, who would suffer so much to lose her, — might even die; for she knew of a little one who had died for grief at having lost her *da*. No: it would be cruel, — it would be wicked, to leave her in such a way. . . .

— "And you leave me for a child, Youma, — a child not your own?" cried Gabriel. "You talk as if you were the only nurse in the world: there are plenty of *das*."

— "Not like me," said Youma, — "not at least for her. I have been mother to her since her own mother died. . . . But it is not the child only, Gabriel; — it is what I owe to those who loved and trusted me all these years." . . . And the old sweetness came back into her voice, while she asked: — "Doudoux, could you think me true, and see me thankless and false to those who have been good to me all my life?"

— "Good to you!" he burst out, with sudden bitterness. "Do you think them good because they do not happen to be bad? How good to you? Because they dress you beautifully, — give you a *belle jupe*, a calendered *madras*, a *collier-choux*, and put gold upon you that folks may cry: — 'See how madame . . . see how monsieur is generous to a slave!' Give them? — no! — lend them only, — put them upon you for a showing: they are not yours! You can own nothing; you are a slave; you are naked as a worm before the law! You have no right to anything, — no, not even to what I gave you; — you have no right to become the wife of the man you choose; — you would have no right, if a mother, to care for your own child, — though you give half your life, all your youth, to nursing children of békés. . . . No, Youma, you were not brought up like your mistress's daughter. Why were you never taught what white ladies know? — why

were you never shown how to read and write? — why are you kept a slave? . . . Good to you? It was to their interest, my girl! — it repays them to-day, — since it keeps you with them, — when you could be free with me."

— "No, no, doudoux," protested the girl, — "you are not just! You do not know my godmother; you do not know what she has been for me; — you could never make me believe she has not been generous and kind! . . . Do you think, Gabriel, that people can be good only for a motive? — do you think M. Desrivières has not been kind to you?"

— "There are good *békés,* Youma; — there are masters who are better masters than others: there is no good master!"

— "Oh, Gabriel! — and M. Desrivières?"

— "Do you believe slavery is a good thing, — a right thing, Yoúma?"

She could not answer him directly. The ethical question of slavery had first been brought to her mind in a vague way by her recent disappointment; — previously the subject would have seemed to her one of those into which it was not quite proper to inquire doubtingly.

— "I think it is wicked to be cruel to slaves," she replied. . . . "But since the good God arranged it so that there should be slaves and masters, doudoux. . . ."

— "*Ou trop sott! — ou trop enfant!*" — he cried out, and held his peace; feeling that it were vain to argue with her, — that what he called her folly and her childishness separated them far more than the will of a mistress. Her idea of duty to her godmother, of duty to the child, appeared to be mingled in some way with her idea of religion, — to which the least light allusion would provoke her anger. He could comprehend it only as a sort of mental weakness created by béké-teaching. To his own thinking, slavery was a kind of trickery, — the duping of blacks by whites; and it was simply because they could not dupe him, that they had given him a position entailing no physical labor, and in which he could feel himself more free than others. He did not feel grateful therefor: it seemed to him that no possible kindnesses, no imaginable indulgences on the part of a master could deserve the voluntary sacrifice of a chance for liberty by the slave. Though really possessing a rude intelligence above his comrades, Gabriel shared many savage traits of his race, — traits that three hundred years of colonial servitude could hardly modify: among others, the hatred of all constraint, — reasonable or unreasonable. Still the Creole *bitaco* prefers hungry liberty to any comfort obtainable by hired labor; — his refusal to work for wages necessitated the importation of coolies, yet he can do the work of three; — he is capable of prodigious physical effort; he will carry on his head twenty miles to town a load of vegetables of his own weight, or twenty-four bread-fruits; he will cutlass his way through forests to the very summit of peaks to find particular herbs and cabbage-palm for the market; he will do anything extraordinary to avoid being under orders,

— martyrize his body by herculean efforts to escape control. . . . This spirit in Gabriel had been temporarily softened by the profits and petty dignity of his position, — by the ambition of being one day able to settle on his own land in some wild place, and live independent of everybody; — but not the least of the reasons which made him valuable at Anse-Marine was his confidence of being able to escape when he pleased. . . . And, nevertheless, judging Youma by himself, the very motive she had urged for her refusal seemed to him the one of all others he could not reason with her against, because he coupled it with his own ideas of the supernatural, — likened it to certain dark superstitions of which he knew the extraordinary power. Through her kindheartedness, the *békés* had been able to impose upon her mind; — and tenderness of heart, except to him and for him alone, he deemed childish and foolish. . . . "*C'est bon khè crabe qui lacause y pa ni tête,*" says the negro proverb. — (It is because of the crab's good heart that he lacks a head.)

Nevertheless he himself had a heart, — though a rough one; — and it was moved by the sight of Youma's silent tears which his anger and his reproaches had caused. He loved her well in his hard way; and all his tenacity of will set itself against the losing of her. She had denied his wish; and he knew her strength of resolve, — yet with time he might find another way to make her his own. Something would depend on herself, — on such influence as she might have with her mistress; but he relied more upon the probability of a social change. Hopeless as he had pictured the future for Youma, he was far from believing it hopeless. Echoes of the words and work of philanthropists had reached him: he knew how and why the English slaves had received their freedom; — he knew also something of which he could not speak, even in a whisper, to Youma. . . . From plantation to plantation there had passed a secret message, — framed in African speech for the ears of those chosen to know and fearless to do; — already, even within the remotest valleys of the colony, hearts had been strangely stirred by the blowing of the great wind of Emancipation. . . .

— "Doudoux-moin!" he suddenly entreated, in a tone of tenderness such as she had never heard him use, — "*pa pleiré conm, ça, chè, — non!*" And she felt him drawing her close in a contrite caress. . . . "It was not with you, little heart, that I was angry! — listen: there are things you do not know, child; but I believe you — you are doing what you think is right. . . . *Pa pleiré, — non! — ti bigioule moin!* . . . Listen: since you will not come, I will not go; — I will stay here at Anse-Marine. . . . *Pa pleiré, doudoux!*"

A little while she sobbed in his embrace without replying; then she murmured: —

— "I shall be more happy, doudoux, to know that you do not go. . . . But it is not a time to be angry, dear, when we must say good-bye for always."

— " Ah! my little wasp! will you let them choose another husband for you, when they have you back in Saint Pierre? " he asked, with a smile of confidence.

— " Gabriel! " she cried, passionately, — " they can never do that! . . . If they will not let me have you, doudoux, I will remain forever as I am. . . . No! — they cannot do that! "

— " *Bon, ti khèmoin!* — then it is not good-bye for always. . . . Wait! "

She looked up, wondering. . . . But in the same moment, Mayotte, tired of playing with her cocoa-nut, and seeing Gabriel, ran to them screaming, " Gabou! — Gabou! " — and clung delightedly to the commandeur's knee.

" No! — go and play a little while longer," said Youma. " Gabou is too tired to be pulled about."

" Are you, Gabou? " asked Mayotte straining her little head back to look up to his face. And without waiting for his answer, she went on to tell him: — " Oh! Gabou! we are going back to town with *papoute!* "

" He knows that," said Youma; " go and play."

" But, da, I am tired! " she answered discontentedly, still clinging to Gabriel's knee, expecting him to toss her up in his arms. . . . " *Pouend moin!* " she coaxed, — " take me up! — take me up! "

" *Pauv piti, màgré, ça!* " exclaimed Gabriel, lifting her to the level of his great bronze face, — " you do not care one bit that you are going to leave Gabou and all your dear friends at Anse-Marine, — *piess, piess, piti mechante!* — you do not love Gabou! "

" Yes, I do! " she cooed, patting his dark cheeks, — " I do love you, Gabou! "

" *Allé! — ti souyè!* — you love Gabou to play with you: that is all! And Gabou has no time to play with you now; — Gabou must go and see what everybody is doing, before it is time to sound the *cònclambi. . . . Bo! — Adié, cocotte.*"

He placed her in her nurse's arms, and kissed Youma also, — but on the forehead only, as he had seen M. Desrivières do . . . because of the child. . . . " *Adié, ti khè!* "

" *Pou toujou?* " she murmured, almost inaudibly, vainly struggling with the emotion which stifled her voice, — " for always? "

— " *Ah! non, chè!* " he answered, smiling to give her hope. . . . " *Mône pa k'encontré; — moune k'encontré toujou.*"

(Only the mornes never meet; — folk always meet again.)

X

. . . Would she ever see him again? she asked herself unceasingly through all her wakefulness of that night, — her last save one at Anse-Marine. But always came the self-answer of tears. . . . She heard the

number of the hour at which she might have fled with him to freedom, and hour after hour, tinkled out by the little bronze salon timepiece through its vaulted glass. She closed her eyes, — and still, as through their shut lids, saw the images of the evening: the figure of Gabriel, and Mayotte playing with her cocoa-nut, and the velvet shadowing of the black cliffs on the black sand, and a white sheeting and leaping of surf, — silent like breakings of cloud. They went and came, — distorted and vanished and returned again with startling vividness, as if they would never fade utterly away. Only in the first hours of the morning there began for her that still soft darkness which is rest from thought.

But again a little while, and her mind wakened to the fancy of a voice calling her name, — faintly, as from a great distance, — a voice remembered as in a dream one holds remembrance of dreams gone before.

Then she became aware of a face, — the face of a beautiful brown woman looking at her with black soft eyes, — smiling under the yellow folds of a *madras* turban, — and lighted by a light that came from nowhere, — that was only a memory of some long-dead morning. And through the dimness round about it a soft blue radiance grew, — the ghost of a day; and she knew the face and murmured to it: — "*Doudoux-manman.*" . . .

. . . They two were walking somewhere she had been long ago, — somewhere among mornes: she felt the guiding of her mother's hand as when a child.

And before them as they went, something purple and vague and vast rose and spread, — the enormous spectre of the sea, rounding to the sky. And in the pearliness over its filmy verge there loomed again the vision of the English island, with long shreddings of luminous cloud across its violet peaks. . . . Slowly it brightened and slowly changed its color as she gazed; and all the peaks flushed crimson to their tips, — like a budding of wondrous roses from sea to sun. . . .

And Douceline, softly speaking, as to an infant, said: —

— "*Travail Bon-Dié toutt joli, anh?*" — (Is it not all-pretty, the work of the good God?)

— "Oh! my little jewel-mamma, — *ti-bijou-manman!* — oh! my little-heart-mamma, — *ti-khè-manman!* . . . I must not go!" . . .

. . . But Douceline was no longer with her, — and the shining shadow of the island had also passed away, — and she heard the voice of Mayotte crying . . . somewhere behind trees.

And she hastened there, and found her, under some huge growth that spread out coiling roots far and wide: one could not discern what tree it was for the streaming weight of lianas upon it. The child had plucked a combre leaf, and was afraid, — something so strange had trickled upon her fingers.

— "It is only the blood-liana," said Youma: "they dye with it." . . .

— "But it is warm," said the child, — still full of fear. . . . Then both

became afraid because of a heavy pulsing sound, dull as the last flappings of a cannon-echo among the mornes. The earth shook with it. And the light began to fail, — dimmed into a red gloom, as when the sun dies.

— "It is the tree!" gasped Mayotte, — "*the heart of a tree!*"

But they could not go: a weird numbness weighed their feet to the ground.

And suddenly the roots of the tree bestirred with frightful life, and reached out writhing to wrap about them; — and the black gloom of branches above them became a monstrous swarming; — and the ends of the roots and the ends of the limbs had eyes. . . .

. . . And through the ever-deepening darkness came the voice of Gabriel, crying, — "*It is a Zombi! — I cannot cut it!*"

XI

THE season of heavy humid heat and torrential rains, — the long *hivernage,* — had passed with its storms; — and the season of north-east winds, when the heights grow cool; — and the season of dryness, when the peaks throw off their wrappings of cloud. It was the *renouveau,* the most delicious period of the year, — that magical spring-time of the tropics, when the land suddenly steeps itself in iridescent vapor, and all distances become jewel-tinted, while nature renews her saps after the bleaching and withering of the dry months, and rekindles all her colors. The forests covered themselves at once with fruit and flowers; the shrivelled lianas revived their luminous green, put forth new million tendrils, and over the heights of the *grands bois* poured down cataracts of blue, white, pink, and yellow blossom. The palmistes and the angelins appeared to grow suddenly taller as they shook off their dead plumes; — an aureate haze hung over the valleys of ripe cane; — and mountain roads began to turn green almost to their middle under the immense invasion of new-born grasses, herbs, and little bushes. . . . Mosses and lichens sprouted everywhere upon surfaces of stone or timber unprotected by paint; — grasses shot up through the jointing of basaltic pavements; and, simultaneously, tough bright plants burst into life from all the crevices of walls and roofs, attacking even the solid masonry of fortifications, compelling man to protect his work. An infinite variety: ferns and capillaria and vines that sink their tendrils into the hardest rock; — the *thé-miraille,* and the *mousse-miraille;* the *pourpier* and the wild guava; the *fleuri-Noël,* the Devil's tobacco (*tabac-diabe*), and the *lakhératt;* — even little trees, that must be removed at once for the safety of dwellings, — such as the young *fromager* or silk-cotton, — rose from wall tops and roofs, — branching from the points of gables, — rooting upon ridges and cornices. . . . The enormous cone of Pelée, which through the weeks of north winds had outlined the cusps of its cratered head against the blue light, once more drew down the clouds about it, and

changed the tawny tone of its wrinkled slopes to lush green. Soft thunders rolled among the hills; tepid dashes of rain refreshed the earth at intervals; — the air grew sweet with balsamic scents; — the color of the sky itself deepened.

But though the land might put forth all its bewitchment, the hearts of the colonists were heavy. For the first time in many years the magnificent crop was being gathered with difficulty: there were mills silent for the want of arms to feed them. For the first time in centuries the slave might refuse to obey, and the master fear to punish. The Republic had been proclaimed; and the promise of emancipation had aroused in the simple minds of the negroes a ferment of fantastic ideas, — free gifts of plantations, — free donations of wealth, — perpetual repose unearned, — paradise life for all. They had seen the common result of freedom accorded for services exceptional; — they were familiar with the life of the free classes; — but such evidence had small value for them: the liberty given by the *béké* resembled in nothing that peculiar quality of liberty to be accorded by the Republic!

They had dangerous advisers, unfortunately, to nourish such imaginings: men of color who foresaw in the coming social transformation larger political opportunities. The situation had totally changed since the time when slaves and freedmen fought alike on the side of the planters against Rochambeau and republicanism, against the *bourgeoisie* and the *patriotes*. The English capture of the island had justified that distrust of the first Revolution shown by the *hommes de couleur*, and had preserved the old régime for another half-century. But during that half-century the free class of color had obtained all the privileges previously refused it by prejudice or by caution; and the interests of the *gens de couleur* had ceased to be inseparably identified with those of the whites. They had won all that was possible to win by the coalition; and they now knew the institution of slavery doomed beyond hope, not by the mere fiat of a convention, but by the opinion of the nineteenth century. And the promise of universal suffrage had been given. There were scarcely twelve thousand whites; — there were one hundred and fifty thousand blacks and half-breeds.

Yet there was nothing in the aspect or attitude of the slave population which could fully have explained to a stranger the alarm of the whites. The subject race had not only been physically refined by those extraordinary influences of climate and environment which produce the phenomena of creolization; but the more pleasing characteristics of the original savage nature, — its emotional artlessness, its joyousness, its kindliness, its quickness to sympathy, its capacity to find pleasure in trifles, — had been cultivated and intensified by slavery. The very speech of the population, — the curious patois shaped in the mould of a forgotten African tongue, and liquefied with fulness of long vowel sounds, — caressed the ear like the cooing of pigeons. . . . Even to-day the stranger may find in the gentler traits of this exotic humanity an indescribable charm, — despite all those

changes of character wrought by the vastly increased difficulties of life under the new conditions. Only the Creole knows by experience the darker possibilities of the same semi-savage nature: its sudden capacities of cruelty, — its blind exaltations of rage, — its stampede-furies of destruction.

. . . Before the official announcement of political events reached the colony, the negroes, — through some unknown system of communication swifter than government vessels, — knew their prospects, knew what was being done for them, felt themselves free. A prompt solution of the slavery question was more than desirable; — delay was becoming dangerous. There were as yet no hostile manifestations; — but the slave-owners, — knowing the history of those sudden uprisings which revealed an unsuspected power of organization and a marvellous art of secrecy, — felt the air full of menace, and generally adopted a policy of caution and forbearance. But in a class accustomed to command there will always be found men whose anger makes light of prudence, and whose resolve challenges all consequences. Such a one among the planters of 1848 dared to assert his rights even on the eve of emancipation; — chastised with his own hand the slave who refused to work, and sent him to the city prison to await the judgment of a law that might at any moment become obsolete.

His rashness precipitated the storm. The *travailleurs* began to leave the plantations, and to mass in armed bands upon the heights overlooking Saint Pierre. The populace of the city rose in riot, burst into the cutlass stores and seized the weapons, surrounded the jail and demanded the release of the prisoner. . . . "*Si ou pa lagué y, ké ouè! — nou ké fai toutt nègue'bitation descenne!*" That terrible menace first revealed the secret understanding between the slaves of the port and the blacks of the plantation; — the officers of the law recoiled before the threat, and turned their prisoner loose.

But the long-suppressed passion of the subject class was not appeased: the mob continued to parade the streets, uttering cries never heard before, — "*Mort aux blancs! — À bas les békés!*" . . . feeling secured from military interference by the recognized cowardice of a republican governor. Evening found the riot still unquelled, — the whites imprisoned in their residences, or fleeing for refuge to the ships in the harbor. And those dwelling on the hills, keeping watch, heard all through the night the rallying *ouklé* of negroes striding by, armed with cutlasses and bamboo pikes and bottles filled with sand. Twenty-four hours later, the whole slave-population of the island was in revolt; and the towns were threatened with a general descent of the *travailleurs*.

XII

Another day found the situation still more sinister. All business was suspended; every store and warehouse closed; even the markets remained

empty; the bakeries had been pillaged, and provisions had become almost unobtainable. A rumor was abroad that emancipation had been voted, — that the news was being concealed, — that the official proclamation of freedom could only be enforced by an appeal to arms. . . .

Prior to the outbreak there had been a fierce heat of political excitement, created by the republican election. The white slave-holders had voted for a freedman faithful to their interests; the men of color had used their freshly acquired privileges to secure representation in the person of a noted French abolitionist. Pictures of him had been distributed by thousands, together with republican cockades and tiny tricolored flags: the people kissed the pictures with tears of enthusiasm and shouts of "*Vive papa!*" — the colored children waved the little flags and cried: "*Vive la République!*" — some were so young they could only cry, "*Vive la 'Ipipi!*" And the complete victory of the *hommes de couleur* only intensified the exaltation. . . . But after the affair of the jail, the children ceased to appear in the streets with their little flags; and there was no longer a distribution of cockades, but a distribution of cutlasses — new cutlasses, for they had to be sharpened, and all the grindstones were in requisition.

. . . It became more and more perilous for the whites to show themselves in the streets. They watched for chances to get to the ships, under the protection of their own slaves or of loyal freedmen, having influence with the populace, knowing every dark face in it. But after mid-day such faithful servants began to find their devotion unavailing: strange negroes were mingling with the rioters, — savage-looking men, whom the city domestics had never seen before, and who replied to the assurance "*C'est yon bon béké*" (this is a *good* white) only by abuse or violence. Armed bands incessantly paraded, — beating drums, — chanting, — shouting "*À bas les békés!*" — watching for a fugitive to challenge with the phrase, — "*Eh! citoyen . . . citoyenne . . . arrête! Je te parle!*" — affecting French speech for the pleasure of the insulting *tutoiement*. They peered for white faces at windows, cursed them, clamored: "*Mi! ausouè-à ké debrayé ou!*" — gesturing with knives as if opening fish. Some great aggressive movement seemed to be preparing; and the *travailleurs* were always massing upon the heights. The whites who could not flee, feeling their lives in danger, — tried to prepare for defence: in some houses the women and girls made ball-cartridges. Slaves betrayed these preparations; and a rumor circulated that the békés were secretly organizing to attack the mob. . . . The time was long past when the whites could suppress a riot, and hang men of color to the mango-trees of the Batterie d'Esnotz; but what they had done in other days was remembered against them.

It was in the Quarter of the Fort, — the most ancient part of the city, situated on an eminence, and isolated by the Rivière Roxelane, — that the white Creoles found themselves least safe from attack. It was especially difficult for them to reach the ships: the bridges and all approaches to the

shore being crowded with armed negroes. The greater number of the houses were small, and could offer little protection if besieged; — and many persons preferred to leave their own homes and seek asylum in the few large dwellings of the district. Among such were the Desrivières family, who found refuge with their relatives the De Kersaints. The De Kersaint residence was unusually roomy, — not more than two full stories high, but long, broad, and built with the solidity of a stronghold. It stood at the verge of the old quarter, in a steeply sloping street, descending westward so as to leave a great half-disk of sea visible above the roofs, and ascending eastward to join a country road leading to the interior. The windows of the rear overlooked vast cane-fields, extending far up the flanks of the Montagne Pelée, whose clouded crest towered fifteen miles away.

There were more than thirty persons assembled for safety at the De Kersaints' — mostly wives and daughters of relatives; and there was serious alarm among these. In the forenoon the servants had deserted the house, — one of them, a negress, irritated by some reproach, had left with the threat: *"Ausouè ou kè ouè — attennc!"* (Wait! you will see tonight!) M. de Kersaint, an old gentleman of seventy, who, seconded by his son, had made the fugitives as comfortable as was possible, strove to calm their fears. He believed the night would bring nothing worse than a great increase of noise and menace: he did not think the leaders of the city populace intended more than intimidation. There might be a general descent of the plantation hands, — that would be a graver danger; but there were five hundred troops in the neighboring barracks. No criminal violence had yet occurred in the quarter: it was reported that a gentleman had been killed in the other end of the city, — but there were so many wild reports!

. . . As a fact, the whites of the Fort, — mostly deserted by their slaves and domestics, — knew little of what was going on even in their immediate vicinity. Things that for two hundred years had been done in darkness and secrecy were now being done openly in the light. An occult power had suddenly assumed unquestioned sway, — the power of the African sorcerer.

Under the tamarinds of the Place du Fort, a *quimboiseur* plied his ghastly calling, — selling amulets, selling fetiches, selling magical ointments made of the grease of serpents. Before him stood an open cask filled with *tafia* mingled with gunpowder and thickened with bodies of crushed wasps. About him crowded the black men of the port, — the half-nude *gabarriers,* wont to wield oars twenty-five feet long; — the herculean *nèguegouôs-bois,* brutalized by the labor of paddling their massive and awkward craft; — tough *canotiers,* whose skins of bronze scarcely bead in the hottest summer sun; — the crews of the *yôles* and the *sabas* and the gommiers; — the men of the cooperies, and the cask rollers, and the stowers; — and the fishers of *tonne,* — and the fishers of sharks. *"Ça qui lè?"* shouted the quimboiseur, serving out the venom in cups of tin, — *"Ça qui lè vini bouè y?* . . . Who will drink it, the Soul of a Man? — the

Spirit of Combat? — the Essence of Falling to Rise? — the Heart-Mover? — the Hell-Breaker? " . . . And they clamored for it, swallowed it — the wasps and the gunpowder and the alcohol, — drinking themselves into madness.

. . . Sunset yellowed the sky, — filled the horizon with flare of gold; — the sea changed its blue to lilac; — the mornes brightened their vivid green to a tone so luminous that they seemed turning phosphorescent. Rapidly the glow crimsoned, — shadows purpled; and night spread swiftly from the east, — black-violet and full of stars.

Even as the last vermilion light began to fade, there sounded from the Place du Fort a long, weird, hollow call, that echoed sobbingly through all the hills like an enormous moan. Then another, — from the Mouillage; — another, — from the river-mouth; — and others, interblending, from the *pirogues* and the *gabarres* and the *sabas* of the harbor: the blowing of a hundred lambi-shells, — the negroes of the city calling to their brethren of the hills. . . . So still, the fishers of sharks, from the black coast of Prêcheur, call the *travailleurs* of the heights to descend and divide the flesh.

And other moaning signals responded faintly, — from the valley of the Roxelane and the terraces of Perrinelle, — from the Morne d'Orange and the Morne Mirail and the Morne Labelle: the *travailleurs* were coming! . . . And from the market-place, where by lantern-light the sorcerer still gave out his *léssence-brisé-lcnfè,* and his amulets and grease of serpents, began to reverberate ominously the heavy pattering of a *tamtam.*

Barricaded within their homes, the whites of the lower city could hear the tumult of the gathering. . . . Masters and slaves alike were haunted by a dream of blood and fire. — the memory of Hayti.

XIII

At the De Kersaints' all the apartments of the upper floor had been given up to the fugitives, except one front room where the men remained on watch: many of the women and young girls preferred to sit up with them rather than seek repose. Down-stairs all the windows and doors had been securely closed; and it was decided to extinguish all lights during the passing of a mob. Then was converse on the events of the preceding day, the late election, prospects of emancipation, the history of former uprisings, — some of which the older men remembered well, — and on the character of negroes. This topic brought out a series of anecdotes, — some sinister, but mostly droll. A planter in the little assembly related a story about one of his own slaves who had saved enough money to buy a cow. At the first announcement of the political change in France he took the cow out of the field and tied it to the porch of his master's house. "*Pouki ou marré vache lanmaison?*" (Why do you tie the cow to the house?) asked the

planter. . . . *"Moin ka marré vache lanmaison, maîte, pace yo ka proclamé la repiblique — pisse you fois repiblique-à proclamé, zaffai ta yon c'est ta toutt"* (Master, I tie the cow to the house because they proclaim the Republic, — for once that the Republic is proclaimed, the belongings of one are the belongings of everybody). In spite of the general anxiety, this narrative provoked laughter. Then, the conversation taking another turn, M. Desrivières told the story of Youma and the serpent, — there being many present who had not heard of the incident before. The young capresse, who sat with Mayotte on her knees, arose with the child, and left the apartment before M. Desrivières had ended his recital. A few minutes later he followed her into the adjoining room, called her away from the little one, and said to her, in an undertone which could not reach the child's ears: —

— "Youma, my daughter, the street is very quiet now; and I think it will be better for you to leave the child with my mother, and pass the night with our colored neighbors. . . . I can open the door for you."

— "Why, master?" . . . She had never asked him why before.

— "*Mafi,*" he answered, with a caress in his eyes, "I cannot ask you to stay with us to-night. There is danger for all of us," he added, sinking his voice to a whisper: "we may be attacked."

— "That is why I wish to stay, master." . . . This time she spoke aloud and firmly.

— "Oh! papa!" cried Mayotte, coming between them, — "do not send her anywhere! — I want her to tell me stories!"

— "Little egotist!" said M. Desrivières, stooping to kiss her, — "and if Youma wishes to go?" . . .

— "You do not, — do you, *da?*" asked the child in surprise. She imagined herself at a sort of evening pleasure party.

— "I will stay to tell you stories," said Youma. . . . M. Desrivières pressed her hand, and left her with the child.

. . . As M. Desrivières announced, the street had become very quiet. It was one of the most retired: during the day there had been no gatherings in it; — some bands of negroes had passed from time to time shouting *"A bas les békés!"* — but since nightfall the disorderly element had disappeared. White citizens ventured to open their windows and look abroad. They heard the blowing of the lambi-shells without guessing its meaning, — imagined some fresh excitement in the direction of the harbor. Nevertheless, all became more anxious. The rushing of the water along the steep gutters, — the mountain water purifying every street, — seemed to sound unusually loud.

— "It always makes a great noise in this street," said M. de Kersaint, — "there is so much incline."

— "I think we are all more or less nervous to-night," said another gentleman.

But Youma, suddenly returning alone to the room where the men conversed, pointed to the windows, and exclaimed: —

— "It is not the water!"

The ears of the half-breed have a singular keenness to sounds. . . . All talk ceased: the men held their breath to listen.

XIV

A HEAVY murmur, as of far surf, filled the street, — slowly loudened, — became a dull unbroken roar. From the heights it seemed to approach, and with it a glow, as of conflagration. . . . At once in every house the lights were extinguished, the windows closed, the doors secured; — the street became desolate as a cemetery. But from behind the slatted shutters of upper rooms all could watch the brightening of the light, hear the coming of the roar. . . .

— "*Yo ka vini!*" cried Youma.

And into the high street suddenly burst a storm of clamorings, a blaze of torch fires, — as a dense mass of black men in canvas trousers, hundreds naked to the waist, came moving at a run: the downpour of the *travailleurs*. Under the shock of their bare feet the dwellings trembled: — through all the walls a vibration passed, as of a faint earthquake. . . . If they would only go by!

Hundreds had already passed; and still the rushing vision seemed without end, the cascading of great straw hats interminable; — and over the torrent of it the steel of pikes and plantation forks and brandished cutlasses flickered in the dancing of torch fires. But there came an unexpected halt, — a struggling and shouldering, a stifling pressure, — a half lull in the tempest of shouting; while the street filled with a sinister odor of alcohol, — a stench of *tafia*. Evidently the mob was drunk, and being so, doubly dangerous. . . . Some one had given an order, which nobody could fully hear; a stentorian voice repeated it, as the tumult subsided: "*Là! — làmênm! — caïe békê!*" All the black faces turned to the dwelling of the De Kersaints; and all the black throats roared again. Unfortunately the imposing front of the building, — the only two-story edifice in a street of cottages, — had signalled out its proprietors as rich békés. To be a béké, a white, and to be rich, was in the belief of the simple *travailleur* at least, to be an aristocrat, an enemy of emancipation, — most likely a slave-holder. . . . "*Fouillé là!*" the same immense voice pealed — (Search there!); — and the whole house shook to a furious knocking at the main entrance, of which the massive double doors were secured by an iron bar, as well as by lock and bolt. "*Ouvé! — ouvé ba nou!*" (Open for us) shouted the crowd.

M. de Kersaint unfastened a shutter of one of the upper front rooms, and looked down upon the mob. It was an appalling mob; — there were nightmare-faces in it. Most of the visages were unfamiliar; but some he could

recognize — faces of the port: many of the roughest city class had joined the *travailleurs* before their descent. There were women also in the mob, — gesticulating, screaming: some were plantation negresses; others were not, — and these were the worst. . . .

— "*Ça oulé, méfi?*" asked M. de Kersaint.

The first time they could not hear him for the uproar; but it soon calmed at the sight of the white-haired béké at the window: everybody wanted to listen. M. de Kersaint was not seriously alarmed; — he did not believe the crowd could dare more than a brutal manifestation, — what in the patois is termed a *voum*. He repeated in Creole: —

— "What do you want, my sons?" . . . It was thus the béké addressed the slave; — in his lips the word *monfi* had an almost patriarchal meaning of affection and protection: its use survives even in these republican years. But as uttered in that moment by M. de Kersaint, it fell upon the political passion of the mob like oil on fire.

— "*Ou sé pè-nou, anh?*" — laughed a mocker: "Are you our father? . . . There are no more 'my sons': there are only citizens, — *anni cittoyen!*"

— "*Y trop souyé! — y trop malin!*" screamed a woman's voice. "He wants to flatter us, the old béké! — he is too sly!"

— "*Cittoyens, pouloss,*" responded M. de Kersaint. "Why do you want to break into my house? Have I ever done harm to any of you?"

— "You have arms in the house!" answered the same menacing voice that had first directed the attention of the populace to the dwelling. It rang from the chest of a very tall negro, who seemed to be the leader of the riot: he wore only a straw hat and cotton trousers, and carried a cutlass. All at once M. de Kersaint remembered having seen him before, — working on the plantation of Fond-Laillet, as commandeur.

— "Sylvain, my son," answered M. de Kersaint, "we have no arms here. But we have women and children here. We have nothing to do with your wrongs."

— "*Ouvé ba nou!*"

— "None of you have any right to enter my house."

— "*Ouvé ba nou!*"

— "You have no right." . . .

— "Ah! we will take the right," shouted the leader; and a general roar went up, — thousands of excited voices reiterating the demand, "*Ouvé ba nou!*"

The white head withdrew from the window, and a young face appeared at it, — dark, handsome, and resolute; — the head of the younger De Kersaint.

— "*Tas de charognes!*" shouted the young man, — "yes, we have arms; and we know how to use them! The first one of you who enters this house, I shall make his black brains leap!"

He had a single loaded pistol: there was not another weapon in the building. He counted on the cowardice of the mob. But the negroes knew, or thought they knew, the truth: the old béké had not lied to them; — they were not afraid.

— "*Bon! nou ké ouè!*" menaced the leader. . . . "*Ennou!*" he cried, turning to the crowd, "*crazé caïe-là!*" Almost in the same instant, a stone shot by some powerful hand whirred by the head of the younger De Kersaint, and crashed into the furniture of the apartment. Vainly the shutters were bolted: a second missile dashed them open again; — a third shivered those of the next window. Stone followed stone. There were several persons severely injured; — a lady was stricken senseless; — a gentleman's shoulder fractured. And the cry of the crowd was for more stones — "*Ba nou ouôches! — ba ouôches!*" — because the central pavement before the house was a rough cement, affording scanty material for missiles. But the lower cross-street was paved with rounded rocks from the river-bed; — a line of negresses formed from the point of attack to the corner at the cry of "*Fai lachaîne!*" — and the disjointed pavement was passed up along the line by apronfuls. There was perfect order in this system of supplying projectiles: the black women had been trained for generations to "make the chain" when transporting stone from the torrents to the site of a building, or the place of a protection-wall.

Then the stone shower became terrific, — pulverizing furniture, bursting partitions, shattering chamber doors. . . . How the Creole negro can fling a stone may be comprehended only by those who have seen him, on mountain roads, bring down fruit from trees growing at inaccessible heights. . . . All the shutters of the upper front rooms had already ceased to exist; — the inmates had sought refuge in the rear apartments. But the shutters of the windows of the ground-floor, being very heavy, solid, and partly protected with iron, continued to resist; and the doors of the great arch-way defied the brawny pressure of all the shoulders pushed against them.

— "*Méné pié-bois içi! — pié-bois! — pié-bois!*" cried the men, straining to burst the doors, under cover of the bombardment; and the cry passed up the street toward the mountain slope. . . . From within the house it was no longer possible to observe what the mob were doing; — the windows were unapproachable. But such a shout suddenly made itself heard from the street that it was evident something new had occurred. . . . "Ah! the soldiers!" exclaimed Madame de Kersaint.

She was mistaken. The fresh excitement had been caused by the appearance of the *pié-bois,* — a weighty log carried by a crew of twenty men, — all crying "*Ba lai! — ba lai!*" Then those pushing at the doors fell back to give the battering-ram full play.

The men chanted as they swung it. . . . "*Soh-soh! — yaïe-yah! Rhâlé fò!*" And all the house shook to the enormous blow.

— "*Soh-soh! — yaïe-yah! Rhâlé fò!*" Bolts and locks burst; — the

framework itself loosened in a showering of mortar; — the broad iron bar within still held, but it had bent like a bow, and the doors had yielded fully five inches.

— "*Soh-soh! — yaïe-yah! Rhâlé fò!*" A clang of broken metal; an explosion of splintered timber, — and the doors were down. The arch-way rang out the clap of their fall like a cannon-shot; the log-bearers dropped their log; — a brute roar of exultation acclaimed the feat. . . . Within, all was black.

There was a moment's hesitation; — the darkness and the voidness intimidated. "*Pòté flambeau vini!*" shouted the chief to the torch-bearers, reaching for a light . . . "*ba moin! ba moin!*" He snatched one, and leaped forward, brandishing his weapon in the other hand. But precisely as he passed the threshold, a stunning report pealed through the arch-way; and the tall negro staggered, dropping torch and cutlass, — flung up both naked arms, reeled half round, and fell on his back, dead. The younger De Kersaint had kept his word.

The negroes at the entrance would have turned back in panic; but the pressure from behind, the rush of blind fury, was resistless; and the van of the populace was hurled into the arch-way, — struggling, howling, striking, stumbling over the corpse and the broken doors, — and with such an impetus that many fell. . . . The younger De Kersaint had not thought of retreat, even when the gentlemen who had descended with him, finding resistance hopeless, were remounting to the upper rooms: he still stood at the foot of the stairs with his empty pistol, — believing himself able to hold back the invasion, to terrorize by moral force. But terror may become a blind rage, even in the slave, — when made desperate by the necessity of confronting a pistol muzzle; and the blacks flung themselves on the young man with the very fury of fear. He had time only to dash his useless weapon in the face of the foremost, as a bayonet fastened to a pole passed through his body: then he sank without one cry under such a mad slashing of cutlasses that strikers wounded each other in their frenzy. . . . Simultaneously a double-barrelled gun, loaded with ball, was fired from the entrance at those reascending the stair-way, — both barrels together, — and M. Desrivières fell. He expired almost instantly, before his comrades could drag him into a room, of which the doors were at once barricaded with all the heavy furniture available; — the entire charge had entered his back, shattering the spine.

. . . Then, after the momentary panic, came the reaction of hate, the mob thirst of vengeance; — traditional hate of the white intensified by the passions of the hour; vengeance for the fear inspired, for the killing of their leader, for all fancied or remembered wrongs. But the apartments of the ground-floor were empty: the békés had retreated to the upper rooms, whither it might be dangerous to pursue them; — perhaps they had arms

in reserve for the last extremity. It was at all events certain they could not escape. The windows of the rear were high, and looked down upon a plantation road skirting cane-fields, where armed blacks were on the watch; and the side walls were solid masonry without a single opening. Neither was escape possible by way of the roof, — elevated fully twenty feet above the tiles of adjoining cottages; — the békés were helpless! . . . But no one now offered to lead the assault. There were only clamorings, — hideous threats, — utterances that seemed the conception of cannibals in delirium. . . . Meanwhile the body of the dead leader, raised upon a broken door for a litter, was being paraded through the streets by torch-light: armed men ran beside the corpse, pointing to the pink brain oozing from the wound, and crying: — *"Mi! — yo k'assassiné nou! yo ka tchoué fouè nou!"* . . . The excitement became maniacal; but one voice, — a woman's, the voice of the wife of dead Sylvain, shrieked clearly through it all: —

— *"Ametté difé, zautt! — brilé toutt béké!"*

And the mob caught up the cry, — stormed it through the street. *"Difé! —ametté difé!"* . . . But what if the békés should make a desperate rush upon the incendiaries? . . . *"Oté lescalié!"* some one suggested, and settled all hesitations. There were arms enough to tear down any stair-way in five minutes: it took less time for the rioters to obey the suggestion. They pulled away the stairs; — they smashed the wreck into kindling-wood, piled it on the tiles of the hall-way, and fired it with torches. The balustrade was of mahogany, but the steps were *bois du nord*, — yellow pine, resinous and light. . . . *"Ka pleine gomme! — ka brilé bien!"* . . . Simultaneously the furniture of the lower rooms was demolished; — everything they contained was heaped upon the fire, — combustible or incombustible: portraits, curtains, *verrines*, bronzes, mats, mirrors, hangings. . . . *"Sacré tonnè, nou ké brilé toutt! — Ké ouè!"* . . . There were sounds of affright overhead, — of feet wildly running, — of furniture being dragged away from doors; — there were shrieks. . . . *"Ouaill!* — not so brave now, the cursed békés! " . . . Then faces appeared through the smoke, looking down, — a gray-haired lady, striving to be heard, to speak to some heart; — a young mother dumbly pointing to her infant. Two black arms reached up toward her in savage mockery, and a negress hoarsely screamed: *"Ba moin li! — moin sé vlopé enlai y conm chatrou!"* — miming the cuttle-fish devouring its prey! A burst of obscene laughter followed the infamous jest. . . . But the heat and smoke became unendurable; — the incendiaries retreated, — mostly to the street, — a few to the cane-fields in the rear, to watch for any possible attempts at escape. There was no more stone-throwing: the flingers were weary; and the mob was content to watch the progress of its vengeance. The shrieks could still be heard: they were answered by gibes and curses.

The arch-way reddened, — lighted, — began to glow like a furnace,

forcing by its heat a general falling back from the entrance. . . . And soon the crackling within became a low roar, like the sound of a torrent; — all the *rez-de-chaussée* was seized by the flame. It put long yellow tongues through the windows; — they serpentined about the masonry, licked the key-stones and the wall above them, — striving to climb; — began to devour the framework of the shutters. . . . And, at intervals, from street to street, sounded the sinister melancholy blowing of the great sea-shells.

Over all the roofs of the city the voice of an immense bell began to peal, — rapidly, continuously: the *bourdon* of the cathedral was tolling the tocsin. One after another the bells of the lesser churches joined in the alarm. But, for the first time, the pumps remained in their station-houses; — the black firemen ignored the summons! And still the soldiers, — though muttering mutiny, — were rigidly confined to their barracks by superior order. Yet the Governor knew the city was at the mercy of a negro mob, — knew the white population in peril of massacre. The order seemed incredible to those who read it with their eyes; — it remains one of the stupefying facts of French colonial history, — one of the many, not of the few, which appear to justify the white Creole's undying hate of Republicanism.

. . . Fanned by a south breeze, the flames assailed the rear more rapidly than the front rooms of the besieged dwelling, — destroying communication between them by devouring the lobbies connected with the wrecked end of the stair-way. And, through the outpouring of smoke, men began to drop or leap from back windows, — abandoning the women and children, — goaded by the swift menace of the hideous death of fire. On the side of the street there could have been no hope; — on that of the fields there were fewer enemies: there was one desperate chance. Of those who took it, the first two were killed almost as soon as they touched the ground; — the third, a French stranger, although frightfully wounded, was able to run for his life nearly two hundred yards before being overtaken and despatched. But two others could profit by the incident; — gaining the high canes, they fled at a crouching run between the stems, — doubling, — twisting, — and were quickly lost to view. . . . "*Béké lacampagne mênm!*" — cried the disappointed pursuers: — "*yo ka fenne kanne!*" Only a country Creole could have known the trick, successfully practised by maroon negroes — *fenne kanne* (splitting the cane). . . . Darkness and the terror of serpents aided their flight.

Some chivalrous men, — M. de Kersaint was of these, — refused that desperate chance; remained to give the consolation of their presence to the helpless women, — mothers and wives, and young girls delicately bred, into the perfumed quiet of whose existence no shadow of fear had ever fallen before. . . . There were still nearly thirty souls within the flaming house; and the soldiers were still confined to their barracks!

The smoke being blown to the north, the view of the burning dwelling continued almost unobscured on the street side; — but as yet, since the

stone-throwing began, no one had appeared at the front windows. The rabble watched and wondered: it seemed as if all communication between the front and rear of the besieged house had already been cut off, so that the last scene of the tragedy would remain hidden from them — a brutal disappointment! The first frenzy had exhausted itself: there remained only that revolting apathy which in savage natures follows the perpetration of a monstrous act; — the tempest of outcries subsided to a low tide-roar of excited converse. . . .

— "They are women and children who scream like that."

— "Malediction! they are békés — let them all roast together!"

— "*Ouill papa!* — they burned enough of us when they had the power to do it."

— "Yes! they burned poor negresses for sorcery. The priest who confessed them said they were innocent."

— "*Ah! c'est taille-Toto ça!* — that was in the old times!"

— "Old times! We don't forget. These are the new times, *monfi!*"

— "*C'est jusse!* . . . We are fighting for our liberty now."

— "Houlo!" . . . A new roar went up: — there was an apparition at one of the windows.

— "*Mi! yon négresse!*"

— "It is the *da! — Jesis-Maïa!*"

— "*Pé! — pézautt!*"

— "Pé!" . . . The word ran from mouth to mouth; — almost a hush followed its passage through the crowd, a hush of malignant expectation; — then Youma's powerful contralto rang out with the distinctness of a bugle-call.

— "*Eh! tas de capons!*" she cried, fearlessly, — "cowards afraid to face men! Do you believe you will win your liberty by burning women and children? . . . Who were the mothers of you?"

— "We are burning békés," screamed a negress in response: "they kill us; we kill them. *C'est jusse!*"

— "You lie!" cried Youma. "The békés never murdered women and children."

— "They did!" vociferated a mulatto in the mob, better dressed than his fellows; — "they did! In seventeen hundred and twenty-one! In seventeen hundred and twenty-five!" . . .

— "*Aïe, macaque!*" mocked Youma. "So you burn negresses now for imitation! What have the negresses done to you, Ape?"

— "They are with the békés."

— "You were with the békés yesterday, the day before yesterday, and always, — every one of you. The békés gave you to eat, — the békês gave you to drink, — the békés cared for you when you were sick. . . . The békés gave *you* freedom, O you traitor mulatto! — gave you a name, *saloprie!* — gave you the clothes you wear, ingrate! *You!* — you are not

fighting for your liberty, liar! — the békés gave it to you long ago for your black mother's sake! . . . *Fai doctè, milatt!* — I know you! . . . coward without a family, without a race! — *fai filosofe,* O you renegade, who would see a negress burn because a negress was your mother! — *Allé!* — *bâtà-béké!* " . . .

Then Youma could not make herself heard: a fresh outburst of vociferation drowned her voice. But her reproaches had struck home in at least one direction: she had touched and stirred the smouldering contempt, the secret jealous hate of the black for the freedman of color; and the mulatto's discomfiture was hailed by yells of ironical laughter. In the same moment there was a violent pushing and swaying; — some one was forcing his way to the front through all the pressure, — rapidly, furiously, — smiting with his elbows, battering with his shoulders: a giant *capre*. . . . He freed himself, and sprang into the clear space before the flaming building, — making his cutlass flicker about his head, — and shouted: —

— "*Nou pa ka brilé négresse!*" . . .

The mulatto put to scorn advanced and would have spoken; — ere he could utter a word, the travailleur, with a sudden backward blow of his unarmed hand, struck him to the ground.

— "*A moin! méfouè!*" thundered the tall new-comer; — "Stand by me, brothers! — we do not burn negresses!"

And Youma knew it was Gabriel who stood there alone, — colossal, menacing, magnificent, — daring the hell about him for her sake. . . .

— "*Ni raison! ni raison!*" responded numbers. . . . "*Non! nou pa ka brilé négresse! . . . Châché léchelle!*" Gabriel had forced sympathy, — wrung some sentiment of compassion from those wild-beast hearts. . . . "*Pòté léchelle vini! — içi yon léchelle!*" was clamored through the crowd . . . "a ladder! — a ladder!"

Five minutes, — and a ladder touched the window. Gabriel himself ascended it, — reached the summit, — put out his iron hand. Even as he did so, Youma, stooping to the sill, lifted Mayotte from behind it.

The child was stupid with terror; — she did not know him.

— "Can you save her?" asked Youma, — holding up the little fair-haired girl.

Gabriel could only shake his head; — the street sent up so frightful a cry. . . .

— "*Non! — non! — non! — non! — pa lè yche-béké! — janmain yche-béké!*"

— "Then you cannot save me!" cried Youma, clasping the child to her bosom, — "*janmain! janmain, mon ami!*"

— "Youma, in the name of God. . . ."

— "In the name of God you ask me to be a coward! . . . Are you vile, Gabriel? — are you base? . . . Save myself and leave the child to burn? . . . Go!"

— "Leave the *béké's yche!* — leave it! — leave it, girl!" shouted a hundred voices.

— "*Moin!*" cried Youma, retreating beyond the reach of Gabriel's hand, — "*moin!* . . . Never shall I leave it, — never! I shall go to God with it."

— "Burn with it, then!" howled the negroes . . . "down with that ladder! down with it, down with it!" Gabriel had barely time to save himself, when the ladder was dragged away. All the first fury of the riot seemed to have been rekindled by the sight of the child; — again broke forth the tempest of maledictions.

But it calmed: there was another reaction. . . . Gabriel had men to strive with him. They forced the ladder once more into position; — they formed a desperate guard about it with their cutlasses; — they called to Youma to descend. . . . She only waved her hand in disdain: she knew she could not save the child.

And the fierce heat below began to force back the guard at the foot of the ladder. . . . Suddenly Gabriel uttered a curse of despair. Touched by a spirit of flame, the ladder itself had ignited, — and was burning furiously.

Youma remained at the window. There was now neither hate nor fear in her fine face: it was calm as in the night when Gabriel had seen her stand unmoved with her foot on the neck of the serpent.

Then a sudden light flared up behind her, and brightened. Against it her tall figure appeared, as in the Chapel of the Anchorage Gabriel had seen, against a background of gold, the figure of *Notre Dame du Bon Port*. . . . Still her smooth features expressed no emotion. Her eyes were bent upon the blond head hiding against her breast; — her lips moved; — she was speaking to the child. . . . Little Mayotte looked up one moment into the dark and beautiful bending face, — and joined her slender hands, as if to pray.

But with a piteous cry, she clung to Youma's bosom again. For the thick walls quivered as walls quiver when a hurricane blows; — and there were shrieks, — frantic, heart-sickening, from the rear, — and a noise of ruining, as of smothered thunder. Youma drew off her foulard of yellow silk, and wrapped it about the head of the child: then began to caress her with calm tenderness, — murmuring to her, — swaying her softly in her arms, — all placidly, as though lulling her to sleep. Never to Gabriel's watching eyes had Youma seemed so beautiful.

Another minute — and he saw her no more. The figure and the light vanished together, as beams and floor and roof all quaked down at once into darkness. . . . Only the skeleton of stone remained, — black-smoking to the stars.

And stillness came, — a stillness broken only by the hissing and crepitation of the stifled fire, the booming of the tocsin. the far blowing of the

great sea-shells. The victims had ceased to shriek; — the murderers stood appalled by the ghastliness of their consummated crime.

Then, from below, the flames wrestled out again, — crimsoning the smoke whirls, the naked masonry, the wreck of timbers. They wriggled upward, lengthening, lapping together, — lifted themselves erect, — grew taller, fiercer, — twined into one huge fluid spire of tongues that flapped and shivered high into the night. . . .

The yellowing light swelled, — expanded from promontory to promontory, — palpitated over the harbor, — climbed the broken slopes of the dead volcano leagues through the gloom. The wooded mornes towered about the city in weird illumination, — seeming loftier than by day, — blanching and shadowing alternately with the soaring and sinking of fire; — and at each huge pulsing of the glow, the white cross of their central summit stood revealed, with the strange passion of its black Christ.

. . . And the same hour, from the other side of the world, — a ship was running before the sun, bearing the Republican gift of liberty and promise of universal suffrage to the slaves of Martinique.

MARY E. WILKINS FREEMAN

(1862–)

MARY ELEANOR WILKINS was born at Randolph, Massachusetts, in 1862. Her family was descended of Puritans. At an early age she was taken to Vermont. After attending Mt. Holyoke Seminary, she returned to Randolph. In 1902 she married, and has since that time resided in New Jersey. Her first published book was a volume of short stories, which appeared in 1886. This was followed in quick succession by several other collections, and then by several novels. Mrs. Freeman has portrayed in her best work the life of the New England farming folk, with great sympathy and understanding.

Evelina's Garden, though not so well known as some of Mrs. Freeman's short stories, is a remarkable example of her work.

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EVELINA'S GARDEN

ON the south a high arbor-vitæ hedge separated Evelina's garden from the road. The hedge was so high that when the school-children lagged by, and the secrets behind it fired them with more curiosity than those between their battered book covers, the tallest of them by stretching up on tiptoe could not peer over. And so they were driven to childish engineering feats, and would set to work and pick away sprigs of the arbor-vitæ with their little fingers, and make peep-holes — but small ones, that Evelina might not discern them. Then they would thrust their pink faces into the hedge, and the enduring fragrance of it would come to their nostrils like a gust of aromatic breath from the mouth of the northern woods, and peer into Evelina's garden as through the green tubes of vernal telescopes.

Then suddenly hollyhocks, blooming in rank and file, seemed to be marching upon them like platoons of soldiers, with detonations of color that dazzled their peeping eyes; and, indeed, the whole garden seemed charging with its mass of riotous bloom upon the hedge. They could scarcely take in details of marigold and phlox and pinks and London-pride and cock's-combs, and prince's-feathers waving overhead like standards.

Sometimes also there was the purple flutter of Evelina's gown; and Evelina's face, delicately faded, hung about with softly drooping gray

curls, appeared suddenly among the flowers, like another flower uncannily instinct with nervous melancholy.

Then the children would fall back from their peep-holes, and huddle off together with scared giggles. They were afraid of Evelina. There was a shade of mystery about her which stimulated their childish fancies when they heard her discussed by their elders. They might easily have conceived her to be some baleful fairy intrenched in her green stronghold, withheld from leaving it by the fear of some dire penalty for magical sins. Summer and winter, spring and fall, Evelina Adams never was seen outside her own domain of old mansion-house and garden, and she had not set her slim lady feet in the public highway for nearly forty years, if the stories were true.

People differed as to the reason why. Some said she had had an unfortunate love affair, that her heart had been broken, and she had taken upon herself a vow of seclusion from the world, but nobody could point to the unworthy lover who had done her this harm. When Evelina was a girl, not one of the young men of the village had dared address her. She had been set apart by birth and training, and also by a certain exclusiveness of manner, if not of nature. Her father, old Squire Adams, had been the one man of wealth and college learning in the village. He had owned the one fine old mansion-house, with its white front propped on great Corinthian pillars, overlooking the village like a broad brow of superiority.

He had owned the only coach and four. His wife during her short life had gone dressed in rich brocades and satins that rustled loud in the ears of the village women, and her nodding plumes had dazzled the eyes under their modest hoods. Hardly a woman in the village but could tell — for it had been handed down like a folk-lore song from mother to daughter — just what Squire Adams's wife wore when she walked out first as bride to meeting. She had been clad all in blue.

"Squire Adams's wife, when she walked out bride, she wore a blue satin brocade gown, all wrought with blue flowers of a darker blue, cut low neck and short sleeves. She wore long blue silk mitts wrought with blue, blue satin shoes, and blue silk clocked stockings. And she wore a blue crape mantle that was brought from over-seas, and a blue velvet hat, with a long blue ostrich feather curled over it — it was so long it reached her shoulder, and waved when she walked; and she carried a little blue crape fan with ivory sticks." So the women and girls told each other when the Squire's bride had been dead nearly seventy years.

The blue bride attire was said to be still in existence, packed away in a cedar chest, as the Squire had ordered after his wife's death. "He stood over the woman that took care of his wife whilst she packed the things away, and he never shed a tear, but she used to hear him a-goin' up the north chamber nights, when he couldn't sleep, to look at 'em," the women told.

People had thought the Squire would marry again. They said Evelina,

who was only four years old, needed a mother, and they selected one and another of the good village girls. But the Squire never married. He had a single woman, who dressed in black silk, and wore always a black wrought veil over the side of her bonnet, come to live with them, to take charge of Evelina. She was said to be a distant relative of the Squire's wife, and was much looked up to by the village people, although she never did more than interlace, as it were, the fringes of her garments with theirs. "She's stuck up," they said, and felt, curiously enough, a certain pride in the fact when they met her in the street and she ducked her long chin stiffly into the folds of her black shawl by way of salutation.

When Evelina was fifteen years old this single woman died, and the village women went to her funeral, and bent over her lying in a last helpless dignity in her coffin, and stared with awed freedom at her cold face. After that Evelina was sent away to school, and did not return, except for a yearly vacation, for six years to come. Then she returned, and settled down in her old home to live out her life, and end her days in a perfect semblance of peace, if it were not peace.

Evelina never had any young school friend to visit her; she had never, so far as any one knew, a friend of her own age. She lived alone with her father and three old servants. She went to meeting, and drove with the Squire in his chaise. The coach was never used after his wife's death, except to carry Evelina to and from school. She and the Squire also took long walks, but they never exchanged aught but the merest civilities of good-days and nods with the neighbors whom they met, unless indeed the Squire had some matter of business to discuss. Then Evelina stood aside and waited, her fair face drooping gravely aloof. She was very pretty, with a gentle high-bred prettiness that impressed the village folk, although they looked at it somewhat askance.

Evelina's figure was tall, and had a fine slenderness; her silken skirts hung straight from the narrow silk ribbon that girt her slim waist; there was a languidly graceful bend in her long white throat; her long delicate hands hung inertly at her sides among her skirt folds, and were never seen to clasp anything; her softly clustering fair curls hung over her thin blooming cheeks, and her face could scarce be seen, unless, as she seldom did, she turned and looked full upon one. Then her dark blue eyes, with a little nervous frown between them, shone out radiantly; her thin lips showed a warm red, and her beauty startled one.

Everybody wondered why she did not have a lover, why some fine young man had not been smitten by her while she had been away at school. They did not know that the school had been situated in another little village, the counterpart of the one in which she had been born, wherein a fitting mate for a bird of her feather could hardly be found. The simple young men of the country-side were at once attracted and intimidated by her. They cast fond sly glances across the meeting-house at her lovely face, but they were

confused before her when they jostled her in the doorway and the rose and lavender scent of her lady garments came in their faces. Not one of them dared accost her, much less march boldly upon the great Corinthian-pillared house, raise the brass knocker, and declare himself a suitor for the Squire's daughter.

One young man there was, indeed, who treasured in his heart an experience so subtle and so slight that he could scarcely believe in it himself. He never recounted it to mortal soul, but kept it as a secret sacred between himself and his own nature, but something to be scoffed at and set aside by others.

It had happened one Sabbath day in summer, when Evelina had not been many years home from school, as she sat in the meeting-house in her Sabbath array of rose-colored satin gown, and white bonnet trimmed with a long white feather and a little wreath of feathery green, that of a sudden she raised her head and turned her face, and her blue eyes met this young man's full upon hers, with all his heart in them, and it was for a second as if her own heart leaped to the surface, and he saw it, although afterwards he scarce believed it to be true.

Then a pallor crept over Evelina's delicately brilliant face. She turned it away, and her curls falling softly from under the green wreath on her bonnet brim hid it. The young man's cheeks were a hot red, and his heart beat loudly in his ears when he met her in the doorway after the sermon was done. His eager, timorous eyes sought her face, but she never looked his way. She laid her slim hand in its cream-colored silk mitt on the Squire's arm; her satin gown rustled softly as she passed before him, shrinking against the wall to give her room, and a faint fragrance which seemed like the very breath of the unknown delicacy and exclusiveness of life came to his bewildered senses.

Many a time he cast furtive glances across the meeting-house at Evelina, but she never looked his way again. If his timid boy-eyes could have seen her cheek behind its veil of curls, he might have discovered that the color came and went before his glances, although it was strange how she could have been conscious of them; but he never knew.

And he also never knew how, when he walked past the Squire's house of a Sunday evening, dressed in his best, with his shoulders thrust consciously back, and the windows in the westering sun looked full of blank gold to his furtive eyes, Evelina was always peeping at him from behind a shutter, and he never dared go in. His intuitions were not like hers, and so nothing happened that might have, and he never fairly knew what he knew. But that he never told, even to his wife when he married; for his hot young blood grew weary and impatient with this vain courtship, and he turned to one of his villagemates, who met him fairly half way, and married her within a year.

On the Sunday when he and his bride first appeared in the meeting-

house Evelina went up the aisle behind her father in an array of flowered brocade, stiff with threads of silver, so wonderful that people all turned their heads to stare at her. She wore also a new bonnet of rose-colored satin, and her curls were caught back a little, and her face showed as clear and beautiful as an angel's.

The young bridegroom glanced at her once across the meeting-house, then he looked at his bride in her gay wedding finery with a faithful look.

When Evelina met them in the doorway, after meeting was done, she bowed with a sweet cold grace to the bride, who courtesied blushingly in return, with an awkward sweep of her foot in the bridal satin shoe. The bridegroom did not look at Evelina at all. He held his chin well down in his stock with solemn embarrassment, and passed out stiffly, his bride on his arm.

Evelina, shining in the sun like a silver lily, went up the street, her father stalking beside her with stately swings of his cane, and that was the last time she was ever seen at meeting. Nobody knew why.

When Evelina was a little over thirty her father died. There was not much active grief for him in the village; he had really figured therein more as a stately monument of his own grandeur than anything else. He had been a man of little force of character, and that little had seemed to degenerate since his wife died. An inborn dignity of manner might have served to disguise his weakness with any others than these shrewd New-Englanders, but they read him rightly. " The Squire wa'n't ever one to set the river a-fire," they said. Then, moreover, he left none of his property to the village to build a new meeting-house or a town-house. It all went to Evelina.

People expected that Evelina would surely show herself in her mourning at meeting the Sunday after the Squire died, but she did not. Moreover, it began to be gradually discovered that she never went out in the village street nor crossed the boundaries of her own domains after her father's death. She lived in the great house with her three servants — a man and his wife, and the woman who had been with her mother when she died. Then it was that Evelina's garden began. There had always been a garden at the back of the Squire's house, but not like this, and only a low fence had separated it from the road. Now one morning in the autumn the people saw Evelina's man-servant, John Darby, setting out the arbor-vitæ hedge, and in the spring after that there were ploughing and seed-sowing extending over a full half-acre, which later blossomed out in glory.

Before the hedge grew so high Evelina could be seen at work in her garden. She was often stooping over the flower-beds in the early morning when the village was first astir, and she moved among them with her watering-pot in the twilight — a shadowy figure that might, from her grace and her constancy to the flowers, have been Flora herself.

As the years went on, the arbor-vitæ hedge got each season a new growth and waxed taller, until Evelina could no longer be seen above it. That was

an annoyance to people, because the quiet mystery of her life kept their curiosity alive, until it was in a constant struggle, as it were, with the green luxuriance of the hedge.

"John Darby had ought to trim that hedge," they said. They accosted him in the street: "John, if ye don't cut that hedge down a little it'll all die out." But he only made a surly grunting response, intelligible to himself alone, and passed on. He was an Englishman, and had lived in the Squire's family since he was a boy.

He had a nature capable of only one simple line of force, with no radiations or parallels, and that had early resolved itself into the service of the Squire and his house. After the Squire's death he married a woman who lived in the family. She was much older than himself, and had a high temper, but was a good servant, and he married her to keep her to her allegiance to Evelina. Then he bent her, without her knowledge, to take his own attitude towards his mistress. No more could be gotten out of John Darby's wife than out of John Darby concerning the doings at the Squire's house. She met curiosity with a flash of hot temper, and he with surly taciturnity, and both intimidated.

The third of Evelina's servants was the woman who had nursed her mother, and she was naturally subdued and undemonstrative, and rendered still more so by a ceaseless monotony of life. She never went to meeting, and was seldom seen outside the house. A passing vision of a long white-capped face at a window was about all the neighbors ever saw of this woman.

So Evelina's gentle privacy was well guarded by her own household, as by a faithful system of domestic police. She grew old peacefully behind her green hedge, shielded effectually from all rough bristles of curiosity. Every new spring her own bloom showed paler beside the new bloom of her flowers, but people could not see it.

Some thirty years after the Squire's death the man John Darby died; his wife, a year later. That left Evelina alone with the old woman who had nursed her mother. She was very old, but not feeble, and quite able to perform the simple household tasks for herself and Evelina. An old man, who saved himself from the almshouse in such ways, came daily to do the rougher part of the garden-work in John Darby's stead. He was aged and decrepit; his muscles seemed able to perform their appointed tasks only through the accumulated inertia of a patiently toilsome life in the same tracks. Apparently they would have collapsed had he tried to force them to aught else than the holding of the ploughshare, the pulling of weeds, the digging around the roots of flowers, and the planting of seeds.

Every autumn he seemed about to totter to his fall among the fading flowers; every spring it was like Death himself urging on the resurrection; but he lived on year after year, and tended well Evelina's garden, and the gardens of other maiden-women and widows in the village. He was taciturn,

grubbing among his green beds as silently as a worm, but now and then he warmed a little under a fire of questions concerning Evelina's garden. "Never see none sech flowers in nobody's garden in this town, not sence I knowed 'nough to tell a pink from a piny," he would mumble. His speech was thick; his words were all uncouthly slurred; the expression of his whole life had come more through his old knotted hands of labor than through his tongue. But he would wipe his forehead with his shirt-sleeve and lean a second on his spade, and his face would change at the mention of the garden. Its wealth of bloom illumined his old mind, and the roses and honeysuckles and pinks seemed for a second to be reflected in his bleared old eyes.

There had never been in the village such a garden as this of Evelina Adams's. All the old blooms which had come over the seas with the early colonists, and started as it were their own colony of flora in the new country, flourished there. The naturalized pinks and phlox and hollyhocks and the rest, changed a little in color and fragrance by the conditions of a new climate and soil, were all in Evelina's garden, and no one dreamed what they meant to Evelina; and she did not dream herself, for her heart was always veiled to her own eyes, like the face of a nun. The roses and pinks, the poppies and heart's-ease, were to this maiden-woman, who had innocently and helplessly outgrown her maiden heart, in the place of all the loves of life which she had missed. Her affections had forced an outlet in roses; they exhaled sweetness in pinks, and twined and clung in honeysuckle-vines. The daffodils, when they came up in the spring, comforted her like the smiles of children; when she saw the first rose, her heart leaped as at the face of a lover.

She had lost the one way of human affection, but her feet had found a little single side-track of love, which gave her still a zest in the journey of life. Even in the winter Evelina had her flowers, for she kept those that would bear transplanting in pots, and all the sunny windows in her house were gay with them. She would also not let a rose leaf fall and waste in the garden soil, or a sprig of lavender or thyme. She gathered them all, and stored them away in chests and drawers and old china bowls — the whole house seemed laid away in rose leaves and lavender. Evelina's clothes gave out at every motion that fragrance of dead flowers which is like the fragrance of the past, and has a sweetness like that of sweet memories. Even the cedar chest where Evelina's mother's blue bridal array was stored had its till heaped with rose leaves and lavender.

When Evelina was nearly seventy years old the old nurse who had lived with her her whole life died. People wondered then what she would do. "She can't live all alone in that great house," they said. But she did live there alone six months, until spring, and people used to watch her evening lamp when it was put out, and the morning smoke from her kitchen chimney. "It ain't safe for her to be there alone in that great house," they said.

But early in April a young girl appeared one Sunday in the old Squire's pew. Nobody had seen her come to town, and nobody knew who she was or where she came from, but the old people said she looked just as Evelina Adams used to when she was young, and she must be some relation. The old man who had used to look across the meeting-house at Evelina, over forty years ago, looked across now at this young girl, and gave a great start, and his face paled under his gray beard stubble. His old wife gave an anxious, wondering glance at him, and crammed a peppermint into his hand. "Anything the matter, father?" she whispered; but he only gave his head a half-surly shake, and then fastened his eyes straight ahead upon the pulpit. He had reason to that day, for his only son, Thomas, was going to preach his first sermon therein as a candidate. His wife ascribed his nervousness to that. She put a peppermint in her own mouth and sucked it comfortably. "That's all 't is," she thought to herself. "Father always was easy worked up," and she looked proudly up at her son sitting on the hair-cloth sofa in the pulpit, leaning his handsome young head on his hand, as he had seen old divines do. She never dreamed that her old husband sitting beside her was possessed of an inner life so strange to her that she would not have known him had she met him in the spirit. And, indeed, it had been so always, and she had never dreamed of it. Although he had been faithful to his wife, the image of Evelina Adams in her youth, and that one love-look which she had given him, had never left his soul, but had given it a guise and complexion of which his nearest and dearest knew nothing.

It was strange; but now, as he looked up at his own son as he arose in the pulpit, he could seem to see a look of that fair young Evelina, who had never had a son to inherit her beauty. He had certainly a delicate brilliancy of complexion, which he could have gotten directly from neither father nor mother; and whence came that little nervous frown between his dark blue eyes? His mother had blue eyes, but not like his; they flashed over the great pulpit Bible with a sweet fire that matched the memory in his father's heart.

But the old man put the fancy away from him in a minute; it was one which his stern common-sense always overcame. It was impossible that Thomas Merriam should resemble Evelina Adams; indeed, people always called him the very image of his father.

The father tried to fix his mind upon his son's sermon, but presently he glanced involuntarily across the meeting-house at the young girl, and again his heart leaped and his face paled; but he turned his eyes gravely back to the pulpit, and his wife did not notice. Now and then she thrust a sharp elbow in his side to call his attention to a grand point in their son's discourse. The odor of peppermint was strong in his nostrils, but through it all he seemed to perceive the rose and lavender scent of Evelina Adams's youthful garments. Whether it was with him simply the memory of an odor, which affected him like the odor itself, or not, those in the vicinity of

the Squire's pew were plainly aware of it. The gown which the strange young girl wore was, as many an old woman discovered to her neighbor with loud whispers, one of Evelina's, which had been laid away in a sweet-smelling chest since her old girlhood. It had been somewhat altered to suit the fashion of a later day, but the eyes which had fastened keenly upon it when Evelina first wore it up the meeting-house aisle could not mistake it. " It's Evelina Adams's lavender satin made over," one whispered, with a sharp hiss of breath, in the other's ear.

The lavender satin, deepening into purple in the folds, swept in a rich circle over the knees of the young girl in the Squire's pew. She folded her little hands, which were encased in Evelina's cream-colored silk mitts, over it, and looked up at the young minister, and listened to his sermon with a grave and innocent dignity, as Evelina had done before her. Perhaps the resemblance between this young girl and the young girl of the past was more one of mien than aught else, although the type of face was the same. This girl had the same fine sharpness of feature and delicately bright color, and she also wore her hair in curls, although they were tied back from her face with a black velvet ribbon, and did not veil it when she drooped her head, as Evelina's used to do.

The people divided their attention between her and the new minister. Their curiosity goaded them in equal measure with their spiritual zeal. " I can't wait to find out who that girl is," one woman whispered to another.

The girl herself had no thought of the commotion which she awakened. When the service was over, and she walked with a gentle maiden stateliness, which seemed a very copy of Evelina's own, out of the meeting-house, down the street to the Squire's house, and entered it, passing under the stately Corinthian pillars, with a last purple gleam of her satin skirts, she never dreamed of the eager attention that followed her.

It was several days before the village people discovered who she was. The information had to be obtained, by a process like mental thumb-screwing, from the old man who tended Evelina's garden, but at last they knew. She was the daughter of a cousin of Evelina's on the father's side. Her name was Evelina Leonard; she had been named for her father's cousin. She had been finely brought up, and had attended a Boston school for young ladies. Her mother had been dead many years, and her father had died some two years ago, leaving her with only a very little money, which was now all gone, and Evelina Adams had invited her to live with her. Evelina Adams had herself told the old gardener, seeing his scant curiosity was somewhat awakened by the garden, but he seemed to have almost forgotten it when the people questioned him.

" She'll leave her all her money, most likely," they said, and they looked at this new Evelina in the old Evelina's perfumed gowns with awe.

However, in the space of a few months the opinion upon this matter was divided. Another cousin of Evelina Adams's came to town, and this time

an own cousin — a widow in fine black bombazine, portly and florid, walking with a majestic swell, and, moreover, having with her two daughters, girls of her own type, not so far advanced. This woman hired one of the village cottages, and it was rumored that Evelina Adams paid the rent. Still, it was considered that she was not very intimate with these last relatives. The neighbors watched, and saw, many a time, Mrs. Martha Loomis and her girls try the doors of the Adams house, scudding around angrily from front to side and back, and knock and knock again, but with no admittance. "Evelina she won't let none of 'em in more 'n once a week," the neighbors said. It was odd that, although they had deeply resented Evelina's seclusion on their own accounts, they were rather on her side in this matter, and felt a certain delight when they witnessed a crestfallen retreat of the widow and her daughters. "I don't s'pose she wants them Loomises marchin' in on her every minute," they said.

The new Evelina was not seen much with the other cousins, and she made no acquaintances in the village. Whether she was to inherit all the Adams property or not, she seemed, at any rate, heiress to all the elder Evelina's habits of life. She worked with her in the garden, and wore her old girlish gowns, and kept almost as close at home as she. She often, however, walked abroad in the early dusk, stepping along in a grave and stately fashion, as the elder Evelina had used to do, holding her skirts away from the dewy roadside weeds, her face showing out in the twilight like a white flower, as if it had a pale light of its own.

Nobody spoke to her; people turned furtively after she had passed and stared after her, but they never spoke. This young Evelina did not seem to expect it. She passed along with the lids cast down over her blue eyes, and the rose and lavender scent of her garments came back in their faces.

But one night when she was walking slowly along, a full half-mile from home, she heard rapid footsteps behind, and the young minister, Thomas Merriam, came up beside her and spoke.

"Good-evening," said he, and his voice was a little hoarse through nervousness.

Evelina started, and turned her fair face up towards his. "Good-evening," she responded, and courtesied as she had been taught at school, and stood close to the wall, that he might pass; but Thomas Merriam paused also.

"I —" he began, but his voice broke. He cleared his throat angrily, and went on. "I have seen you in meeting," he said, with a kind of defiance, more of himself than of her. After all, was he not the minister, and had he not the right to speak to everybody in the congregation? Why should he embarrass himself?

"Yes, sir," replied Evelina. She stood drooping her head before him, and yet there was a certain delicate hauteur about her. Thomas was afraid to

speak again. They both stood silent for a moment, and then Evelina stirred softly, as if to pass on, and Thomas spoke out bravely. "Is your cousin, Miss Adams, well?" said he.

"She is pretty well, I thank you, sir."

"I have been wanting to — call," he began; then he hesitated again. His handsome young face was blushing crimson.

Evelina's own color deepened. She turned her face away. "Cousin Evelina never sees callers," she said, with grave courtesy; "perhaps you did not know. She has not for a great many years."

"Yes, I did know it," returned Thomas Merriam; "that's the reason I haven't called."

"Cousin Evelina is not strong," remarked the young girl, and there was a savor of apology in her tone.

"But — " stammered Thomas; then he stopped again. "May I — has she any objections to — anybody's coming to see you?"

Evelina started. "I am afraid Cousin Evelina would not approve," she answered, primly. Then she looked up in his face, and a girlish piteousness came into her own. "I am very sorry," she said, and there was a catch in her voice.

Thomas bent over her impetuously. All his ministerial state fell from him like an outer garment of the soul. He was young, and he had seen this girl Sunday after Sunday. He had written all his sermons with her image before his eyes, he had preached to her, and her only, and she had come between his heart and all the nations of the earth in his prayers. "Oh," he stammered out, "I am afraid you can't be very happy living there the way you do. Tell me — "

Evelina turned her face away with sudden haughtiness. "My cousin Evelina is very kind to me, sir," she said.

"But — you must be lonesome with nobody — of your own age — to speak to," persisted Thomas, confusedly.

"I never cared much for youthful company. It is getting dark; I must be going," said Evelina. "I wish you good-evening, sir."

"Shan't I — walk home with you?" asked Thomas, falteringly.

"It isn't necessary, thank you, and I don't think Cousin Evelina would approve," she replied, primly; and her light dress fluttered away into the dusk and out of sight like the pale wing of a moth.

Poor Thomas Merriam walked on with his head in a turmoil. His heart beat loud in his ears. "I've made her mad with me," he said to himself, using the old rustic school-boy vernacular, from which he did not always depart in his thoughts, although his ministerial dignity guarded his conversations. Thomas Merriam came of a simple homely stock, whose speech came from the emotions of the heart, all unregulated by the usages of the schools. He was the first for generations who had aspired to college learning and a profession, and had trained his tongue by the models of the educated

and polite. He could not help, at times, the relapse of his thoughts, and their speaking to himself in the dialect of his family and his ancestors. " She's 'way above me, and I ought to ha' known it," he further said, with the meekness of an humble but fiercely independent race, which is meek to itself alone. He would have maintained his equality with his last breath to an opponent; in his heart of hearts he felt himself below the scion of the one old gentle family of his native village.

This young Evelina, by the fine dignity which had been born with her and not acquired by precept and example, by the sweetly formal diction which seemed her native tongue, had filled him with awe. Now, when he thought she was angered with him, he felt beneath her lady feet, his nostrils choked with a spiritual dust of humiliation.

He went forward blindly. The dusk had deepened; from either side of the road, from the mysterious gloom of the bushes, came the twangs of the katydids, like some coarse rustic quarrellers, each striving for the last word in a dispute not even dignified by excess of passion.

Suddenly somebody jostled him to his own side of the path. " That you, Thomas? Where you been? " said a voice in his ear.

" That you, father? Down to the post-office."

" Who was that you was talkin' with back there? "

" Miss Evelina Leonard."

" That girl that's stayin' there — to the old Squire's? "

" Yes." The son tried to move on, but his father stood before him dumbly for a minute. " I must be going, father. I've got to work on my sermon," Thomas said, impatiently.

Wait a minute," said his father. " I've got something to say to ye, Thomas, an' this is as good a time to say it as any. There ain't anybody 'round. I don't know as ye'll thank me for it — but mother said the other day that she thought you'd kind of an idea — she said you asked her if she thought it would be anything out of the way for you to go up to the Squire's to make a call. Mother she thinks you can step in anywheres, but I don't know. I know your book-learnin' and your bein' a minister has set you up a good deal higher than your mother and me and any of our folks, and I feel as if you were good enough for anybody, as far as that goes; but that ain't all. Some folks have different startin'-points in this world, and they see things different; and when they do, it ain't much use tryin' to make them walk alongside and see things alike. Their eyes have got different cants, and they ain't able to help it. Now this girl she's related to the old Squire, and she's been brought up different, and she started ahead, even if her father did lose all his property. She 'ain't never eat in the kitchen, nor been scart to set down in the parlor, and satin and velvet, and silver spoons, and cream-pots 'ain't never looked anything out of the common to her, and they always will to you. No matter how many such things you may live to have, they'll always get a little the better of ye. She'll be 'way above 'em;

and you won't, no matter how hard you try. Some ideas can't never mix; and when ideas can't mix, folks can't."

"I never said they could," returned Thomas, shortly. "I can't stop to talk any longer, father. I must go home."

"No, you wait a minute, Thomas. I'm goin' to say out what I started to, and then I sha'n't ever bring it up again. What I was comin' at was this: I wanted to warn ye a little. You mustn't set too much store by little things that you think mean consider'ble when they don't. Looks don't count for much, and I want you to remember it, and not be upset by 'em."

Thomas gave a great start and colored high. "I'd like to know what you mean, father," he cried, sharply.

"Nothin'. I don't mean nothin', only I'm older 'n you, and it's come in my way to know some things, and it's fittin' you should profit by it. A young woman's looks at you don't count for much. I don't s'pose she knows why she gives 'em herself half the time; they ain't like us. It's best you should make up your mind to it; if you don't, you may find it out by the hardest. That's all. I ain't never goin' to bring this up again."

"I'd like to know what you mean, father." Thomas's voice shook with embarrassment and anger.

"I ain't goin' to say anything more about it," replied the old man. "Mary Ann Pease and Arabella Mann are both in the settin'-room with your mother. I thought I'd tell ye, in case ye didn't want to see 'em, and wanted to go to work on your sermon."

Thomas made an impatient ejaculation as he strode off. When he reached the large white house where he lived he skirted it carefully. The chirping treble of girlish voices came from the open sitting-room window, and he caught a glimpse of a smooth brown head and a high shell comb in front of the candle-light. The young minister tiptoed in the back door and across the kitchen to the back stairs. The sitting-room door was open, and the candle-light streamed out, and the treble voices rose high. Thomas, advancing through the dusky kitchen with cautious steps, encountered suddenly a chair in the dark corner by the stairs, and just saved himself from falling. There was a startled outcry from the sitting-room, and his mother came running into the kitchen with a candle.

"Who is it?" she demanded, valiantly. Then she started and gasped as her son confronted her. He shook a furious warning fist at the sitting-room door and his mother, and edged towards the stairs. She followed him close. "Hadn't you better jest step in a minute?" she whispered. "Them girls have been here an hour, and I know they're waitin' to see you." Thomas shook his head fiercely, and swung himself around the corner into the dark crook of the back stairs. His mother thrust the candle into his hand. "Take this, or you'll break your neck on them stairs," she whispered.

Thomas, stealing up the stairs like a cat, heard one of the girls call to his mother — "Is it robbers, Mis' Merriam? Want us to come an' help

tackle 'em? " — and he fairly shuddered; for Evelina's gentle-lady speech was still in his ears, and this rude girlish call seemed to jar upon his sensibilities.

" The idea of any girl screeching out like that," he muttered. And if he had carried speech as far as his thought, he would have added, " when Evelina is a girl! "

He was so angry that he did not laugh when he heard his mother answer back, in those conclusive tones of hers that were wont to silence all argument: " It ain't anything. Don't be scared. I'm coming right back." Mrs. Merriam scorned subterfuges. She took always a silent stand in a difficulty, and let people infer what they would. When Mary Ann Pease inquired if it was the cat that had made the noise, she asked if her mother had finished her blue and white counterpane.

The two girls waited a half-hour longer, then they went home. " What do you s'pose made that noise out in the kitchen? " asked Arabella Mann of Mary Ann Pease, the minute they were out-of-doors.

" I don't know," replied Mary Ann Pease. She was a broad-backed young girl, and looked like a matron as she hurried along in the dusk.

" Well, I know what I think it was," said Arabella Mann, moving ahead with sharp jerks of her little dark body.

" What? "

" It was him."

" You don't mean — "

" I think it was Thomas Merriam, and he was tryin' to get up the back stairs unbeknownst to anybody, and he run into something."

" What for? "

" Because he didn't want to see *us*."

" Now, Arabella Mann, I don't believe it! He's always real pleasant to me."

" Well, I do believe it, and I guess he'll know it when I set foot in that house again. I guess he'll find out I didn't go there to see him! He needn't feel so fine, if he is the minister; his folks ain't any better than mine, an' we've got 'nough sight handsomer furniture in our parlor."

" Did you see how the tallow had all run down over the candles? "

" Yes, I did. She gave that candle she carried out in the kitchen to him, too. Mother says she wasn't never any kind of a housekeeper."

" Hush! Arabella: here he is coming now."

But it was not Thomas; it was his father, advancing through the evening with his son's gait and carriage. When the two girls discovered that, one tittered out quite audibly, and they scuttled past. They were not rivals; they simply walked faithfully side by side in pursuit of the young minister, giving him as it were an impartial choice. There were even no heart-burnings between them; one always confided in the other when she supposed herself to have found some slight favor in Thomas's sight; and, indeed, the

young minister could scarcely bow to one upon the street unless she flew to the other with the news.

Thomas Merriam himself was aware of all this devotion on the part of the young women of his flock, and it filled him with a sort of angry shame. He could not have told why, but he despised himself for being the object of their attention more than he despised them. His heart sank at the idea of Evelina's discovering it. What would she think of him if she knew all those young women haunted his house and lagged after meeting on the chance of getting a word from him? Suppose she should see their eyes upon his face in meeting time, and decipher their half-unconscious boldness, as he had done against his will. Once Evelina had looked at him, even as the older Evelina had looked at his father, and all other looks of maidens seemed to him like profanations of that, even although he doubted afterwards that he had rightly interpreted it. Full it had seemed to him of that tender maiden surprise and wonder, of that love that knows not itself, and sees its own splendor for the first time in another's face, and flees at the sight. It had happened once when he was coming down the aisle after the sermon and Evelina had met him at the door of her pew. But she had turned her head quickly, and her soft curls flowed over her red cheek, and he doubted ever after if he had read the look aright. When he had gotten the courage to speak to her, and she had met him with the gentle coldness which she had learned of her lady aunt and her teacher in Boston, his doubt was strong upon him. The next Sunday he looked not her way at all. He even tried faithfully from day to day to drive her image from his mind with prayer and religious thoughts, but in spite of himself he would lapse into dreams about her, as if borne by a current of nature too strong to be resisted. And sometimes, upon being awakened from them, as he sat over his sermon with the ink drying on his quill, by the sudden outburst of treble voices in his mother's sitting-room below, the fancy would seize him that possibly these other young damsels took fond liberties with him in their dreams, as he with Evelina, and he resented it with a fierce maidenliness of spirit, although he was a man. The thought that possibly they, over their spinning or their quilting, had in their hearts the image of himself with fond words upon his lips and fond looks in his eyes, filled him with shame and rage, although he took the same liberty with the delicately haughty maiden Evelina.

But Thomas Merriam was not given to undue appreciation of his own fascination, as was proved by his ready discouragement in the case of Evelina. He had the knowledge of his conquests forced upon his understanding until he could no longer evade it. Every day were offerings laid upon his shrine, of pound-cakes and flaky pies, and loaves of white bread, and cups of jelly, whereby the culinary skill of his devotees might be proved. Silken purses and beautiful socks knitted with fancy stitches, and holy book-marks for his Bible, and even a wonderful bedquilt, and a fine

linen shirt with hem-stitched bands, poured in upon him. He burned with angry blushes when his mother, smiling meaningly, passed them over to him. " Put them away, mother; I don't want them," he would growl out, in a distress that was half comic and half pathetic. He would never taste of the tempting viands which were brought to him. " How you act, Thomas! " his mother would say. She was secretly elated by these feminine libations upon the altar of her son. They did not grate upon her sensibilities, which were not delicate. She even tried to assist two or three of the young women in their designs; she would often praise them and their handiwork to her son — and in this she was aided by an old woman aunt of hers who lived with the family. " Nancy Winslow is as handsome a girl as ever I set eyes on, an' I never see any nicer sewin'," Mrs. Merriam said, after the advent of the linen shirt, and she held it up to the light admiringly. " Jest look at that hem-stitchin'! " she said.

" I guess whoever made that shirt calkilated 't would do for a weddin' one," said old Aunt Betty Green, and Thomas made an exclamation and went out of the room, tingling all over with shame and disgust.

" Thomas don't act nateral," said the old woman, glancing after him through her iron-bound spectacles.

" I dun'no' what's got into him," returned his mother.

" Mebbe they foller him up a leetle too close," said Aunt Betty. " I dun'no' as I should have ventured on a shirt when I was a gal. I made a satin vest once for Joshua, but that don't seem quite as p'inted as a shirt. It didn't scare Joshua, nohow. He asked me to have him the next week."

" Well, I dun'no'," said Mrs. Merriam again. " I kind of wish Thomas would settle on somebody, for I'm pestered most to death with 'em, an' I feel as if 't was kind of mean takin' all these things into the house."

" They've 'bout kept ye in sweet cake, 'ain't they, lately? "

" Yes; but I don't feel as if it was jest right for us to eat it up, when 't was brought for Thomas. But he won't touch it. I can't see as he has the least idee of any one of them. I don't believe Thomas has ever seen anybody he wanted for a wife."

" Well, he's got the pick of 'em, a-settin' their caps right in his face," said Aunt Betty.

Neither of them dreamed how the young man, sleeping and eating and living under the same roof, beloved of them since he entered the world, holding himself coldly aloof from this crowd of half-innocently, half-boldly ardent young women, had set up for himself his own divinity of love, before whom he consumed himself in vain worship. His father suspected, and that was all, and he never mentioned the matter again to his son.

After Thomas had spoken to Evelina the weeks went on, and they never exchanged another word, and their eyes never met. But they dwelt constantly within each other's thoughts, and were ever present to each other's spiritual vision. Always as the young minister bent over his sermon-paper,

laboriously tracing out with sputtering quill his application of the articles of the orthodox faith, Evelina's blue eyes seemed to look out at him between the stern doctrines like the eyes of an angel. And he could not turn the pages of the Holy Writ unless he found some passages therein which to his mind treated directly of her, setting forth her graces like a prophecy. "The fairest among women," read Thomas Merriam, and nodded his head, while his heart leaped with the satisfied delight of all its fancies, at the image of his love's fair and gentle face. "Her price is far above rubies," read Thomas Merriam, and he nodded his head again, and saw Evelina shining as with gold and pearls, more precious than all the jewels of the earth. In spite of all his efforts, when Thomas Merriam studied the Scriptures in those days he was more nearly touched by those old human hearts which throbbed down to his through the ages, welding the memories of their old loves to his living one until they seemed to prove its eternity, than by the Messianic prophecies. Often he spent hours upon his knees, but arose with Evelina's face before his very soul in spite of all.

And as for Evelina, she tended the flowers in the elder Evelina's garden with her poor cousin, whose own love-dreams had been illustrated as it were by the pinks and lilies blooming around them when they had all gone out of her heart, and Thomas Merriam's half-bold, half-imploring eyes looked up at her out of every flower and stung her heart like bees. Poor young Evelina feared much lest she had offended Thomas, and yet her own maiden decorum had been offended by him, and she had offended it herself, and she was faint with shame and distress when she thought of it. How had she been so bold and shameless as to give him that look at the meeting-house? and how had he been so cruel as to accost her afterwards? She told herself she had done right for the maintenance of her own maiden dignity, and yet she feared lest she had angered him and hurt him. "Suppose he had been fretted by her coolness?" she thought, and then a great wave of tender pity went over her heart, and she would almost have spoken to him of her own accord. But then she would reflect how he continued to write such beautiful sermons, and prove so clearly and logically the tenets of the faith; and how could he do that with a mind in distress? Scarcely could she herself tend the flower-beds as she should, nor set her embroidery stitches finely and evenly, she was so ill at ease. It must be that Thomas had not given the matter an hour's worry, since he continued to do his work so faithfully and well. And then her own heart would be sorer than ever with the belief that his was happy and at rest, although she would chide herself for it.

And yet this young Evelina was a philosopher and an analyst of human nature in a small way, and she got some slight comfort out of a shrewd suspicion that the heart of a man might love and suffer on a somewhat different principle from the heart of a woman. "It may be," thought Evelina, sitting idle over her embroidery with far-away blue eyes, "that

a man's heart can always turn a while from love to other things as weighty and serious, although he be just as fond, while a woman's heart is always fixed one way by loving, and cannot be turned unless it breaks. And it may be wise," thought young Evelina, " else how could the state be maintained and governed, battles for independence be fought, and even souls be saved, and the gospel carried to the heathen, if men could not turn from the concerns of their own hearts more easily than women? Women should be patient," thought Evelina, " and consider that if they suffer 't is due to the lot which a wise Providence has given them." And yet tears welled up in her earnest blue eyes and fell over her fair cheeks and wet the embroidery — when the elder Evelina was not looking, as she seldom was. The elder Evelina was kind to her young cousin, but there were days when she seemed to dwell alone in her own thoughts, apart from the whole world, and she seldom spoke either to Evelina or her old servant-man.

Young Evelina, trying to atone for her former indiscretion and establish herself again on her height of maiden reserve in Thomas Merriam's eyes, sat resolutely in the meeting-house of a Sabbath day, with her eyes cast down, and after service she glided swiftly down the aisle and was out of the door before the young minister could much more than descend the pulpit stairs, unless he ran an indecorous race.

And young Evelina never at twilight strolled up the road in the direction of Thomas Merriam's home, where she might quite reasonably hope to meet him, since he was wont to go to the store when the evening stage-coach came in with the mail from Boston.

Instead she paced the garden paths, or, when there was not too heavy a dew, rambled across the fields; and there was also a lane where she loved to walk. Whether or not Thomas Merriam suspected this, or had ever seen, as he passed the mouth of the lane, the flutter of maidenly draperies in the distance, it so happened that one evening he also went a-walking there, and met Evelina. He had entered the lane from the highway, and she from the fields at the head. So he saw her first afar off, and could not tell fairly whether her light muslin skirt might not be only a white-flowering bush. For, since his outlook upon life had been so full of Evelina, he had found that often the most common and familiar things would wear for a second a look of her to startle him. And many a time his heart had leaped at the sight of a white bush ahead stirring softly in the evening wind, and he had thought it might be she. Now he said to himself impatiently that this was only another fancy; but soon he saw that it was indeed Evelina, in a light muslin gown, with a little lace kerchief on her head. His handsome young face was white; his lips twitched nervously; but he reached out and pulled a spray of white flowers from a bush, and swung it airily to hide his agitation as he advanced.

As for Evelina, when she first espied Thomas she started and half turned, as if to go back; then she held up her white-kerchiefed head with gentle

pride and kept on. When she came up to Thomas she walked so far to one side that her muslin skirt was in danger of catching and tearing on the bushes, and she never raised her eyes, and not a flicker of recognition stirred her sweet pale face as she passed him.

But Thomas started as if she had struck him, and dropped his spray of white flowers, and could not help a smothered cry that was half a sob, as he went on, knocking blindly against the bushes. He went a little way, then he stopped and looked back with his piteous hurt eyes. And Evelina had stopped also, and she had the spray of white flowers which he had dropped, in her hand, and her eyes met his. Then she let the flowers fall again, and clapped both her little hands to her face to cover it, and turned to run; but Thomas was at her side, and he put out his hand and held her softly by her white arm.

"Oh," he panted, "I — did not mean to be — too presuming, and offend you. I — crave your pardon — "

Evelina had recovered herself. She stood with her little hands clasped, and her eyes cast down before him; but not a quiver stirred her pale face, which seemed turned to marble by this last effort of her maiden pride. "I have nothing to pardon," said she. "It was I, whose bold behavior, unbecoming a modest and well-trained young woman, gave rise to what seemed like presumption on your part." The sense of justice was strong within her, but she made her speech haughtily and primly, as if she had learned it by rote from some maiden school-mistress, and pulled her arm away and turned to go; but Thomas's words stopped her.

"Not — unbecoming if it came — from the heart," said he, brokenly, scarcely daring to speak, and yet not daring to be silent.

Then Evelina turned on him, with a sudden strange pride that lay beneath all other pride, and was of a nobler and truer sort. "Do you think I would have given you the look that I did if it had not come from my heart?" she demanded. "What did you take me to be — false and a jilt? I may be a forward young woman, who has overstepped the bounds of maidenly decorum, and I shall never get over the shame of it, but I am truthful, and I am no jilt." The brilliant color flamed out on Evelina's cheeks. Her blue eyes met Thomas's with that courage of innocence and nature which dares all shame. But it was only for a second; the tears sprang into them. "I beg you to let me go home," she said, pitifully; but Thomas caught her in his arms, and pressed her troubled maiden face against his breast.

"Oh, I love you so!" he whispered — "I love you so, Evelina, and I was afraid you were angry with me for it."

"And I was afraid," she faltered, half weeping and half shrinking from him, "lest you were angry with me for betraying the state of my feelings, when you could not return them." And even then she used that gentle formality of expression with which she had been taught by her maiden pre-

ceptors to veil decorously her most ardent emotions. And, in truth, her training stood her in good stead in other ways; for she presently commanded, with that mild dignity of hers which allowed of no remonstrance, that Thomas should take away his arm from her waist, and give her no more kisses for that time.

" It is not becoming for any one," said she, " and much less for a minister of the gospel. And as for myself, I know not what Mistress Perkins would say to me. She has a mind much above me, I fear."

" Mistress Perkins is enjoying her mind in Boston," said Thomas Merriam, with the laugh of a triumphant young lover.

But Evelina did not laugh. " It might be well for both you and me if she were here," said she, seriously. However, she tempered a little her decorous following of Mistress Perkins's precepts, and she and Thomas went hand in hand up the lane and across the fields.

There was no dew that night, and the moon was full. It was after nine o'clock when Thomas left her at the gate in the fence which separated Evelina Adams's garden from the field, and watched her disappear between the flowers. The moon shone full on the garden. Evelina walked as it were over a silver dapple, which her light gown seemed to brush away and dispel for a moment. The bushes stood in sweet mysterious clumps of shadow.

Evelina had almost reached the house, and was close to the great althea bush, which cast a wide circle of shadow, when it seemed suddenly to separate and move into life.

The elder Evelina stepped out from the shadow of the bush. " Is that you, Evelina? " she said, in her soft, melancholy voice, which had in it a nervous vibration.

" Yes, Cousin Evelina."

The elder Evelina's pale face, drooped about with gray curls, had an unfamiliar, almost uncanny, look in the moonlight, and might have been the sorrowful visage of some marble nymph, lovelorn, with unceasing grace. " Who — was with you? " she asked.

" The minister," replied young Evelina.

" Did he meet you? "

" He met me in the lane, Cousin Evelina."

" And he walked home with you across the field? "

" Yes, Cousin Evelina."

Then the two entered the house, and nothing more was said about the matter. Young Evelina and Thomas Merriam agreed that their affection was to be kept a secret for a while. " For," said young Evelina, " I cannot leave Cousin Evelina yet a while, and I cannot have her pestered with thinking about it, at least before another spring, when she has the garden fairly growing again."

" That is nearly a whole year; it is August now," said Thomas, half reproachfully, and he tightened his clasp of Evelina's slender fingers.

"I cannot help that," replied Evelina. "It is for you to show Christian patience more than I, Thomas. If you could have seen poor Cousin Evelina, as I have seen her, through the long winter days, when her garden is dead, and she has only the few plants in her window left! When she is not watering and tending them she sits all day in the window and looks out over the garden and the naked bushes and the withered flower-stalks. She used not to be so, but would read her Bible and good books, and busy herself somewhat over fine needle-work, and at one time she was compiling a little floral book, giving a list of the flowers, and poetical selections and sentiments appropriate to each. That was her pastime for three winters, and it is now nearly done; but she has given that up, and all the rest, and sits there in the window and grows older and feebler until spring. It is only I who can divert her mind, by reading aloud to her and singing; and sometimes I paint the flowers she loves the best on card-board with water-colors. I have a poor skill in it, but Cousin Evelina can tell which flower I have tried to represent, and it pleases her greatly. I have even seen her smile. No, I cannot leave her, nor even pester her with telling her before another spring, and you must wait, Thomas," said young Evelina.

And Thomas agreed, as he was likely to do to all which she proposed which touched not his own sense of right and honor. Young Evelina gave Thomas one more kiss for his earnest pleading, and that night wrote out the tale in her journal. "It may be that I overstepped the bounds of maidenly decorum," wrote Evelina, "but my heart did so entreat me," and no blame whatever did she lay upon Thomas.

Young Evelina opened her heart only to her journal, and her cousin was told nothing, and had little cause for suspicion. Thomas Merriam never came to the house to see his sweetheart; he never walked home with her from meeting. Both were anxious to avoid village gossip, until the elder Evelina could be told.

Often in the summer evenings the lovers met, and strolled hand in hand across the fields, and parted at the garden gate with the one kiss which Evelina allowed, and that was all.

Sometimes when young Evelina came in with her lover's kiss still warm upon her lips the elder Evelina looked at her wistfully, with a strange retrospective expression in her blue eyes, as if she were striving to remember something that the girl's face called to mind. And yet she could have had nothing to remember except dreams.

And once, when young Evelina sat sewing through a long summer afternoon and thinking about her lover, the elder Evelina, who was storing rose leaves mixed with sweet spices in a jar, said, suddenly, "He looks as his father used to."

Young Evelina started. "Whom do you mean, Cousin Evelina?" she asked, wonderingly; for the elder Evelina had not glanced at her, nor even seemed to address her at all.

"Nothing," said the elder Evelina, and a soft flush stole over her withered face and neck, and she sprinkled more cassia on the rose leaves in the jar.

Young Evelina said no more; but she wondered, partly because Thomas was always in her mind, and it seemed to her naturally that nearly everything must have a savor of meaning of him, if her cousin Evelina could possibly have referred to him and his likeness to his father. For it was commonly said that Thomas looked very like his father, although his figure was different. The young man was taller and more firmly built, and he had not the meek forward curve of shoulder which had grown upon his father of late years.

When the frosty nights came Thomas and Evelina could not meet and walk hand in hand over the fields behind the Squire's house, and they very seldom could speak to each other. It was nothing except a "good-day" on the street, and a stolen glance, which set them both a-trembling lest all the congregation had noticed, in the meeting-house. When the winter set fairly in they met no more, for the elder Evelina was taken ill, and her young cousin did not leave her even to go to meeting. People said they guessed it was Evelina Adams's last sickness, and they furthermore guessed that she would divide her property between her cousin Martha Loomis and her two girls and Evelina Leonard, and that Evelina would have the house as her share.

Thomas Merriam heard this last with a satisfaction which he did not try to disguise from himself, because he never dreamed of there being any selfish element in it. It was all for Evelina. Many a time he had looked about the humble house where he had been born, and where he would have to take Evelina after he had married her, and striven to see its poor features with her eyes — not with his, for which familiarity had tempered them. Often, as he sat with his parents in the old sitting-room, in which he had kept so far an unquestioning belief, as in a friend of his childhood, the scales of his own personality would fall suddenly from his eyes. Then he would see, as Evelina, the poor, worn, humble face of his home, and his heart would sink. "I don't see how I ever can bring her here," he thought. He began to save, a few cents at a time, out of his pitiful salary, to at least beautify his own chamber a little when Evelina should come. He made up his mind that she should have a little dressing-table, with an oval mirror, and a white muslin frill around it, like one he had seen in Boston. "She shall have that to sit before while she combs her hair," he thought, with defiant tenderness, when he stowed away another shilling in a little box in his trunk. It was money which he ordinarily bestowed upon foreign missions; but his Evelina had come between him and the heathen. To procure some dainty furnishings for her bridal-chamber he took away a good half of his tithes for the spread of the gospel in the dark lands. Now and then his conscience smote him, he felt shamefaced before his deacons, but

Evelina kept her first claim. He resolved that another year he would hire a piece of land, and combine farming with his ministerial work, and so try to eke out his salary, and get a little more money to beautify his poor home for his bride.

Now if Evelina Adams had come to the appointed time for the closing of her solitary life, and if her young cousin should inherit a share of her goodly property and the fine old mansion-house, all necessity for anxiety of this kind was over. Young Evelina would not need to be taken away, for the sake of her love, from all these comforts and luxuries. Thomas Merriam rejoiced innocently, without a thought for himself.

In the course of the winter he confided in his father; he couldn't keep it to himself any longer. Then there was another reason. Seeing Evelina so little made him at times almost doubt the reality of it all. There were days when he was depressed, and inclined to ask himself if he had not dreamed it. Telling somebody gave it substance.

His father listened soberly when he told him; he had grown old of late.

"Well," said he, "she 'ain't been used to living the way you have, though you have had advantages that none of your folks ever had; but if she likes you, that's all there is to it, I s'pose."

The old man sighed wearily. He sat in his arm-chair at the kitchen fireplace; his wife had gone in to one of the neighbors, and the two were alone.

"Of course," said Thomas, simply, "if Evelina Adams shouldn't live, the chances are that I shouldn't have to bring her here. She wouldn't have to give up anything on my account — you know that, father."

Then the young man started, for his father turned suddenly on him with a pale, wrathful face. "You ain't countin' on that!" he shouted. "You ain't countin' on that — a son of mine countin' on anything like that!"

Thomas colored. "Why, father," he stammered, "you don't think — you know, it's all for *her* — and they say she can't live anyway. I had never thought of such a thing before. I was wondering how I could make it comfortable for Evelina here."

But his father did not seem to listen. "Countin' on that!" he repeated. "Countin' on a poor old soul, that 'ain't ever had anything to set her heart on but a few posies, dyin' to make room for other folks to have what she's been cheated out on. Countin' on that!" The old man's voice broke into a hoarse sob; he got up, and went hurriedly out of the room.

"Why, father!" his son called after him, in alarm. He got up to follow him, but his father waved him back and shut the door hard.

"Father must be getting childish," Thomas thought, wonderingly. He did not bring up the subject to him again.

Evelina Adams died in March. One morning the bell tolled seventy long melancholy tones before people had eaten their breakfasts. They ran to their doors and counted. "It's her," they said, nodding, when they had waited a little after the seventieth stroke. Directly Mrs. Martha Loomis

and her two girls were seen hustling importantly down the road, with their shawls over their heads, to the Squire's house. " Mis' Loomis can lay her out," they said. " It ain't likely that young Evelina knows anything about such things. Guess she'll be thankful she's got somebody to call on now, if she 'ain't mixed much with the Loomises." Then they wondered when the funeral would be, and the women furbished up their black gowns and bonnets, and even in a few cases drove to the next town and borrowed from relatives; but there was a great disappointment in store for them.

Evelina Adams died on a Saturday. The next day it was announced from the pulpit that the funeral would be private, by the particular request of the deceased. Evelina Adams had carried her delicate seclusion beyond death, to the very borders of the grave. Nobody, outside the family, was bidden to the funeral, except the doctor, the minister, and the two deacons of the church. They were to be the bearers. The burial also was to be private, in the Squire's family burial-lot, at the north of the house. The bearers would carry the coffin across the yard, and there would not only be no funeral, but no funeral procession, and no hearse. " It don't seem scarcely decent," the women whispered to each other; " and more than all that, she ain't goin' to be *seen*." The deacons' wives were especially disturbed by this last, as they might otherwise have gained many interesting particulars by proxy.

Monday was the day set for the burial. Early in the morning old Thomas Merriam walked feebly up the road to the Squire's house. People noticed him as he passed. " How terribly fast he's grown old lately! " they said. He opened the gate which led into the Squire's front yard with fumbling fingers, and went up the walk to the front door, under the Corinthian pillars, and raised the brass knocker.

Evelina opened the door, and started and blushed when she saw him. She had been crying; there were red rings around her blue eyes, and her pretty lips were swollen. She tried to smile at Thomas's father, and she held out her hand with shy welcome.

" I want to see her," the old man said, abruptly.

Evelina started, and looked at him wonderingly. " I — don't believe — I know who you mean," said she. " Do you want to see Mrs. Loomis? "

" No; I want to see her."

" *Her?* "

" Yes, *her.*"

Evelina turned pale as she stared at him. There was something strange about his face. " But — Cousin Evelina," she faltered — " she — didn't want — Perhaps you don't know: she left special directions that nobody was to look at her."

" I *want to see her,*" said the old man, and Evelina gave way. She stood aside for him to enter, and led him into the great north parlor, where Evelina Adams lay in her mournful state. The shutters were closed, and

one on entering could distinguish nothing but that long black shadow in the middle of the room. Young Evelina opened a shutter a little way, and a slanting shaft of spring sunlight came in and shot athwart the coffin. The old man tiptoed up and leaned over and looked at the dead woman. Evelina Adams had left further instructions about her funeral, which no one understood, but which were faithfully carried out. She wished, she had said, to be attired for her long sleep in a certain rose-colored gown, laid away in rose leaves and lavender in a certain chest in a certain chamber. There were also silken hose and satin shoes with it, and these were to be put on, and a wrought lace tucker fastened with a pearl brooch.

It was the costume she had worn one Sabbath day back in her youth, when she had looked across the meeting-house and her eyes had met young Thomas Merriam's; but nobody knew nor remembered; even young Evelina thought it was simply a vagary of her dead cousin's.

" It don't seem to me decent to lay away anybody dressed so," said Mrs. Martha Loomis; " but of course last wishes must be respected."

The two Loomis girls said they were thankful nobody was to see the departed in her rose-colored shroud.

Even old Thomas Merriam, leaning over poor Evelina, cold and dead in the garb of her youth, did not remember it, and saw no meaning in it. He looked at her long. The beautiful color was all faded out of the yellow-white face; the sweet full lips were set and thin; the closed blue eyes sunken in dark hollows; the yellow hair showed a line of gray at the edge of her old woman's cap, and thin gray curls lay against the hollow cheeks. But old Thomas Merriam drew a long breath when he looked at her. It was like a gasp of admiration and wonder; a strange rapture came into his dim eyes; his lips moved as if he whispered to her, but young Evelina could not hear a sound. She watched him, half frightened, but finally he turned to her. " I 'ain't seen her — fairly," said he, hoarsely — " I 'ain't seen her, savin' a glimpse of her at the window, for over forty year, and she 'ain't changed, not a look. I'd have known her anywheres. She's the same as she was when she was a girl. It's wonderful — wonderful! "

Young Evelina shrank a little. " We think she looks natural," she said, hesitatingly.

" She looks jest as she did when she was a girl and used to come into the meetin'-house. She *is* jest the same," the old man repeated, in his eager, hoarse voice. Then he bent over the coffin, and his lips moved again. Young Evelina would have called Mrs. Loomis, for she was frightened, had he not been Thomas's father, and had it not been for her vague feeling that there might be some old story to explain this which she had never heard. " Maybe he was in love with poor Cousin Evelina, as Thomas is with me," thought young Evelina, using her own leaping-pole of love to land straight at the truth. But she never told her surmise to any one except Thomas, and that was long afterwards, when the old man was dead. Now she watched him

with her blue dilated eyes. But soon he turned away from the coffin and made his way straight out of the room, without a word. Evelina followed him through the entry and opened the outer door. He turned on the threshold and looked back at her, his face working.

"Don't ye go to lottin' too much on what ye're goin' to get through folks that have died an' not had anything," he said; and he shook his head almost fiercely at her.

"No, I won't. I don't think I understand what you mean, sir," stammered Evelina.

The old man stood looking at her a moment. Suddenly she saw the tears rolling over his old cheeks. "I'm much obliged to ye for lettin' of me see her," he said hoarsely, and crept feebly down the steps.

Evelina went back trembling to the room where her dead cousin lay, and covered her face, and closed the shutter again. Then she went about her household duties, wondering. She could not understand what it all meant; but one thing she understood — that in some way this old dead woman, Evelina Adams, had gotten immortal youth and beauty in one human heart. "She looked to him just as she did when she was a girl," Evelina kept thinking to herself with awe. She said nothing about it to Mrs. Martha Loomis or her daughters. They had been in the back part of the house, and had not heard old Thomas Merriam come in, and they never knew about it.

Mrs. Loomis and the two girls stayed in the house day and night until after the funeral. They confidently expected to live there in the future. "It isn't likely that Evelina Adams thought a young woman no older than Evelina Leonard could live here alone in this great house with nobody but that old Sarah Judd. It would not be proper nor becoming," said Martha Loomis to her two daughters; and they agreed, and brought over many of their possessions under cover of night to the Squire's house during the interval before the funeral.

But after the funeral and the reading of the will the Loomises made sundry trips after dusk back to their old home, with their best petticoats and cloaks over their arms, and their bonnets dangling by their strings at their sides. For Evelina Adams's last will and testament had been read, and therein provision was made for the continuance of the annuity heretofore paid them for their support, with the condition affixed that not one night should they spend after the reading of the will in the house known as the Squire Adams house. The annuity was an ample one, and would provide the widow Martha Loomis and her daughters, as it had done before, with all the needfuls of life; but upon hearing the will they stiffened their double chins into their kerchiefs with indignation, for they had looked for more.

Evelina Adams's will was a will of conditions, for unto it she had affixed two more, and those affected her beloved cousin Evelina Leonard. It was notable that "beloved" had not preceded her cousin Martha Loomis's name in the will. No pretence of love, when she felt none, had she ever

made in her life. The entire property of Evelina Adams, spinster, deceased, with the exception of Widow Martha Loomis's provision, fell to this beloved young Evelina Leonard, subject to two conditions — firstly, she was never to enter into matrimony, with any person whomsoever, at any time whatsoever; secondly, she was never to let the said spinster Evelina Adams's garden, situated at the rear and southward of the house known as the Squire Adams house, die through any neglect of hers. Due allowance was to be made for the dispensations of Providence: for hail and withering frost and long-continued drought, and for times wherein the said Evelina Leonard might, by reason of being confined to the house by sickness, be prevented from attending to the needs of the growing plants, and the verdict in such cases was to rest with the minister and the deacons of the church. But should this beloved Evelina love and wed, or should she let, through any wilful neglect, that garden perish in the season of flowers, all that goodly property would she forfeit to a person unknown, whose name, enclosed in a sealed envelope, was to be held meantime in the hands of the executor, who had also drawn up the will, Lawyer Joshua Lang.

There was great excitement in the village over this strange and unwonted will. Some were there who held that Evelina Adams had not been of sound mind, and it should be contested. It was even rumored that Widow Martha Loomis had visited Lawyer Joshua Lang and broached the subject, but he had dismissed the matter peremptorily by telling her that Evelina Adams, spinster, deceased, had been as much in her right mind at the time of drawing the will as anybody of his acquaintance.

"Not setting store by relations, and not wanting to have them under your roof, doesn't go far in law nor common-sense to send folks to the madhouse," old Lawyer Lang, who was famed for his sharp tongue, was reported to have said. However, Mrs. Martha Loomis was somewhat comforted by her firm belief that either her own name or that of one of her daughters was in that sealed envelope kept by Lawyer Joshua Lang in his strong-box, and by her firm purpose to watch carefully lest Evelina prove derelict in fulfilling the two conditions whereby she held the property.

Larger peep-holes were soon cut away mysteriously in the high arbor vitæ hedge, and therein were often set for a few moments, when they passed that way, the eager eyes of Mrs. Martha or her daughter Flora or Fidelia Loomis. Frequent calls they also made upon Evelina, living alone with the old woman Sarah Judd, who had been called in during her cousin's illness, and they strolled into the garden, spying anxiously for withered leaves or dry stalks. They at every opportunity interviewed the old man who assisted Evelina in her care of the garden concerning its welfare. But small progress they made with him, standing digging at the earth with his spade while they talked, as if in truth his wits had gone therein before his body and he would uncover them.

Moreover, Mrs. Martha Loomis talked much slyly to mothers of young

men, and sometimes with bold insinuations to the young men themselves, of the sad lot of poor young Evelina, condemned to a solitary and loveless life, and of her sweetness and beauty and desirability in herself, although she could not bring the Squire's money to her husband. And once, but no more than that, she touched lightly upon the subject of the young minister, Thomas Merriam, when he was making a pastoral call.

"My heart bleeds for the poor child living all alone in that great house," said she. And she looked down mournfully, and did not see how white the young minister's face turned. "It seems almost a pity," said she, furthermore — "Evelina is a good housekeeper, and has rare qualities in herself, and so many get poor wives nowadays — that some godly young man should not court her in spite of the will. I doubt, too, if she would not have a happier lot than growing old over that garden, as poor Cousin Evelina did before her, even if she has a fine house to live in, and a goodly sum in the bank. She looks pindling enough lately. I'll warrant she has lost good ten pound since poor Evelina was laid away, and" —

But Thomas Merriam cut her short. "I see no profit in discussing matters which do not concern us," said he, and only his ministerial estate saved him from the charge of impertinence.

As it was, Martha Loomis colored high. "I'll warrant he'll look out which side his bread is buttered on; ministers always do," she said to her daughters after he had gone. She never dreamed how her talk had cut him to the heart.

Had he not seen more plainly than anyone else, Sunday after Sunday, when he glanced down at her once or twice cautiously from his pulpit, how weary-looking and thin she was growing? And her bright color was well-nigh gone, and there were pitiful downward lines at the corners of her sweet mouth. Poor young Evelina was fading like one of her own flowers, as if some celestial gardener had failed in his care of her. And Thomas saw it, and in his heart of hearts he knew the reason, and yet he would not yield. Not once had he entered the old Squire's house since he attended the dead Evelina's funeral, and stood praying and eulogising, with her coffin between him and the living Evelina, with her pale face shrouded in black bombazine. He had never spoken to her since, nor entered the house; but he had written her a letter, in which all the fierce passion and anguish of his heart was cramped and held down by formal words and phrases, and poor young Evelina did not see beneath them. When her lover wrote her that he felt it inconsistent with his Christian duty and the higher aims of his existence to take any further steps towards a matrimonial alliance, she felt merely that Thomas either cared no more for her, or had come to consider, upon due reflection, that she was not fit to undertake the responsible position of a minister's wife. "It may be that in some way I failed in my attendance upon Cousin Evelina," thought poor young Evelina, "or it may be that he thinks I have not enough dignity of character to inspire respect

among the older women in the church." And sometimes, with a sharp thrust of misery that shook her out of her enforced patience and meekness, she wondered if, indeed, her own loving freedom with him had turned him against her, and led him in his later and sober judgment to consider her light-minded for a minister's wife. " It may be that I was guilty of great indecorum, and almost, indeed, forfeited my claims to respect for maidenly modesty, inasmuch as I suffered him to give me kisses, and did almost bring myself to return them in kind. But my heart did so entreat me, and in truth it seemed almost like a lack of sincerity for me to wholly withstand it," wrote poor young Evelina in her journal at that time; and she further wrote: " It is indeed hard for one who has so little knowledge to be fully certain of what is or is not becoming and a Christian duty in matters of this kind; but if I have in any manner, through my ignorance or unwarrantable affection, failed, and so lost the love and respect of a good man, and the opportunity to become his helpmeet during life, I pray that I may be forgiven — for I sinned not wilfully — that the lesson may be sanctified unto me, and that I may live as the Lord order, in Christian patience and meekness, and not repining." It never occurred to young Evelina that possibly Thomas Merriam's sense of duty might be strengthened by the loss of all her cousin's property should she marry him, and neither did she dream that he might hesitate to take her from affluence into poverty for her own sake. For herself the property, as put in the balance beside her love, was lighter than air itself. It was so light that it had no place in her consciousness. She simply had thought, upon hearing the will, of Martha Loomis and her daughters in possession of the property, and herself with Thomas, with perfect assurance and rapture.

Evelina Adams' disapprobation of her marriage, which was supposedly expressed in the will, had, indeed, without reference to the property, somewhat troubled her tender heart, but she told herself that Cousin Evelina had not known she had promised to marry Thomas; that she would not wish her to break her solemn promise. And furthermore, it seemed to her quite reasonable that the condition had been inserted in the will mainly through concern for the beloved garden.

" Cousin Evelina might have thought perhaps I would let the flowers die when I had a husband and children to take care of," said Evelina. And so she had disposed of all the considerations which had distressed her, and had thought of no others.

She did not answer Thomas's letter. It was so worded that it seemed to require no reply, and she felt that he must be sure of her acquiescence in whatever he thought best. She laid the letter away in a little rosewood box, in which she had always kept her dearest treasures since her school-days. Sometimes she took it out and read it, and it seemed to her that the pain in her heart would put an end to her in spite of all her prayers for Christian fortitude; and yet she could not help reading it again.

It was seldom that she stole a look at her old lover as he stood in the pulpit in the meeting-house, but when she did she thought with an anxious pang that he looked worn and ill, and that night she prayed that the Lord would restore his health to him for the sake of his people.

It was four months after Evelina Adams's death, and her garden was in the full glory of midsummer, when one evening, towards dusk, young Evelina went slowly down the street. She seldom walked abroad now, but kept herself almost as secluded as her cousin had done before her. But that night a great restlessness was upon her, and she put a little black silk shawl over her shoulders and went out. It was quite cool, although it was midsummer. The dusk was deepening fast; the katydids called back and forth from the wayside bushes. Evelina met nobody for some distance. Then she saw a man coming towards her, and her heart stood still, and she was about to turn back, for she thought for a minute it was the young minister. Then she saw it was his father, and she went on slowly, with her eyes downcast. When she met him she looked up and said good-evening, gravely, and would have passed on, but he stood in her way.

"I've got a word to say to ye, if ye'll listen," he said.

Evelina looked at him tremblingly. There was something strained and solemn in his manner. "I'll hear whatever you have to say, sir," she said.

The old man leaned his pale face over her and raised a shaking forefinger. "I've made up my mind to say something," said he. "I don't know as I've got any right to, and maybe my son will blame me, but I'm goin' to see that you have a chance. It's been borne in upon me that women folks don't always have a fair chance. It's jest this I'm goin' to say: I don't know whether you know how my son feels about it or not. I don't know how open he's been with you. Do you know jest why he quit you?"

Evelina shook her head. "No," she panted — "I don't — I never knew. He said it was his duty."

"Duty can get to be an idol of wood and stone, an' I don't know but Thomas's is," said the old man. "Well, I'll tell you. He don't think it's right for him to marry you, and make you leave that big house, and lose all that money. He don't care anything about it for himself, but it's for you. Did you know that?"

Evelina grasped the old man's arm hard with her little fingers.

"You don't mean that — was why he did it!" she gasped.

"Yes, that was why."

Evelina drew away from him. She was ashamed to have Thomas's father see the joy in her face. "Thank you, sir," she said. "I did not understand. I — will write to him."

"Maybe my son will think I have done wrong coming betwixt him and his idees of duty," said old Thomas Merriam, "but sometimes there's a good deal lost for lack of a word, and I wanted you to have a fair chance

an' a fair say. It's been borne in upon me that women folks don't always have it. Now you can do jest as you think best, but you must remember one thing — riches ain't all. A little likin' for you that's goin' to last, and keep honest and faithful to you as long as you live, is worth more; an' it's worth more to women folks than 't is to men, an' it's worth enough to them. My son's poorly. His mother and I are worried about him. He don't eat nor sleep — walks his chamber nights. His mother don't know what the matter is, but he let on to me some time since."

"I'll write a letter to him," gasped Evelina again. "Good-night, sir." She pulled her little black silk shawl over her head and hastened home, and all night long her candle burned, while her weary little fingers toiled over pages of foolscap-paper to convince Thomas Merriam fully, and yet in terms not exceeding maidenly reserve, that the love of his heart and the companionship of his life were worth more to her than all the silver and gold in the world. Then the next morning she despatched it, all neatly folded and sealed, and waited.

It was strange that a letter like that could not have moved Thomas Merriam, when his heart, too, pleaded with him so hard to be moved. But that might have been the very reason why he could withstand her, and why the consciousness of his own weakness gave him strength. Thomas Merriam was one, when he had once fairly laid hold of duty, to grasp it hard, although it might be to his own pain and death, and maybe to that of others. He wrote to poor young Evelina another letter, in which he emphasized and repeated his strict adherence to what he believed the line of duty in their separation, and ended it with a prayer for her welfare and happiness, in which, indeed, for a second, the passionate heart of the man showed forth. Then he locked himself in his chamber, and nobody ever knew what he suffered there. But one pang he did not suffer which Evelina would have suffered in his place. He mourned not over nor realized the grief of her tender heart when she should read his letter, otherwise he could not have sent it. He writhed under his own pain alone, and his duty hugged him hard, like the iron maiden of the old tortures, but he would not yield.

As for Evelina, when she got his letter, and had read it through, she sat still and white for a long time, and did not seem to hear when old Sarah Judd spoke to her. But at last she rose and went to her chamber, and knelt down, and prayed for a long time; and then she went out in the garden and cut all the most beautiful flowers, and tied them in wreaths and bouquets, and carried them out to the north side of the house, where her cousin Evelina was buried, and covered her grave with them. And then she knelt down there, and hid her face among them, and said, in a low voice, as if in a listening ear, "I pray you, Cousin Evelina, forgive me for what I am about to do."

And then she returned to the house, and sat at her needlework as usual;

but the old woman kept looking at her, and asking if she were sick, for there was a strange look in her face.

She and old Sarah Judd had always their tea at five o'clock, and put the candles out at nine, and this night they did as they were wont. But at one o'clock in the morning young Evelina stole softly down the stairs with her lighted candle, and passed through into the kitchen; and a half-hour after she came forth into the garden, which lay in full moonlight, and she had in her hand a steaming teakettle, and she passed around among the shrubs and watered them, and a white cloud of steam rose around them. Back and forth she went to the kitchen; for she had heated the great copper wash-kettle full of water; and she watered all the shrubs in the garden, moving amid curling white wreaths of steam, until the water was gone. And then she set to work and tore up by the roots with her little hands and trampled with her little feet all the beautiful tender flower-beds; all the time weeping, and moaning softly: "Poor Cousin Evelina! poor Cousin Evelina! Oh, forgive me, poor Cousin Evelina!"

And at dawn the garden lay in ruin, for all the tender plants she had torn up by the roots and trampled down, and all the stronger-rooted shrubs she had striven to kill with boiling water and salt.

Then Evelina went into the house, and made herself tidy as well as she could when she trembled so, and put her little shawl over her head, and went down the road to the Merriams' house. It was so early the village was scarcely astir, but there was smoke coming out of the kitchen chimney at the Merriams'; and when she knocked, Mrs. Merriam opened the door at once, and stared at her.

"Is Sarah Judd dead?" she cried; for her first thought was that something must have happened when she saw the girl standing there with her wild pale face.

"I want to see the minister," said Evelina, faintly, and she looked at Thomas's mother with piteous eyes.

"Be you sick?" asked Mrs. Merriam. She laid a hard hand on the girl's arm, and led her into the sitting-room, and put her into the rocking-chair with the feather cushion. "You look real poorly," said she. "Sha'n't I get you a little of my elderberry wine?"

"I want to see him," said Evelina, and she almost sobbed.

"I'll go right and speak to him," said Mrs. Merriam. "He's up, I guess. He gets up early to write. But hadn't I better get you something to take first? You do look sick."

But Evelina only shook her head. She had her face covered with her hands, and was weeping softly. Mrs. Merriam left the room, with a long backward glance at her. Presently the door opened and Thomas came in. Evelina stood up before him. Her pale face was all wet with tears, but there was an air of strange triumph about her.

"What do you mean?" he cried out, staring at her, for indeed he thought for a minute that her wits had left her.

"The garden is dead," said she. "Last night I watered the roses with boiling water and salt, and I pulled the other flowers up by their roots. The garden is dead, and I have lost all Cousin Evelina's money, and it need not come between us any longer." She said that, and looked up in his face with her blue eyes, through which the love of the whole race of loving women from which she had sprung, as well as her own, seemed to look, and held out her little hands; but even then Thomas Merriam could not understand, and stood looking at her.

"Why — did you do it?" he stammered.

"Because you would have me no other way, and — I couldn't bear that anything like that should come between us," she said, and her voice shook like a harp-string, and her pale face went red, then pale again.

But Thomas still stood staring at her. Then her heart failed her. She thought that he did not care, and she had been mistaken. She felt as if it were the hour of her death, and turned to go. And then he caught her in his arms.

"Oh," he cried, with a great sob, "the Lord make me worthy of thee, Evelina!"

There had never been so much excitement in the village as when the fact of the ruined garden came to light. Flora Loomis, peeping through the hedge on her way to the store, had spied it first. Then she had run home for her mother, who had in turn sought Lawyer Lang, panting bonnetless down the road. But before the lawyer had started for the scene of disaster, the minister, Thomas Merriam, had appeared, and asked for a word in private with him. Nobody ever knew just what that word was, but the lawyer was singularly uncommunicative and reticent as to the ruined garden.

"Do you think the young woman is out of her mind?" one of the deacons asked him, in a whisper.

"I wish all the young women were as much in their minds; we'd have a better world," said the lawyer, gruffly.

"When do you think we can begin to move in here?" asked Mrs. Martha Loomis, her wide skirts sweeping a bed of uprooted verbenas.

"When your claim is established," returned the lawyer, shortly, and turned on his heel and went away, his dry old face scanning the ground like a dog on a scent. That afternoon he opened the sealed document in the presence of witnesses, and the name of the heir to whom the property fell was disclosed. It was "Thomas Merriam, the beloved and esteemed minister of this parish," and young Evelina would gain her wealth instead of losing it by her marriage. And furthermore, after the declaration of the name of the heir was this added: "This do I in the hope and belief that neither the greed of riches nor the fear of them shall prevent that which

is good and wise in the sight of the Lord, and with the surety that a love which shall triumph over so much in its way shall endure, and shall be a blessing and not a curse to my beloved cousin, Evelina Leonard."

Thomas Merriam and Evelina were married before the leaves fell in that same year, by the minister of the next village, who rode over in his chaise, and brought his wife, who was also a bride, and wore her wedding-dress of a pink and pearl shot silk. But young Evelina wore the blue bridal array which had been worn by old Squire Adams's bride, all remodelled daintily to suit the fashion of the times; and as she moved, the fragrances of roses and lavender of the old summers during which it had been laid away were evident, like sweet memories.

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

(1882–

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER has attempted in such works as the tale that follows tc reconstruct the life and atmosphere of the early days in Pennsylvania, especially among the pioneers who established the industries that have since developed parts of the State from a wilderness into a vast network of steel furnaces. Nothing he has written is more definitely characteristic than *Tubal Cain.*

TUBAL CAIN

I

ALEXANDER HULINGS sat at the dingy, green-baize covered table, with one slight knee hung loosely over the other, and his tenuous fingers lightly gripping the time-polished wooden arms of a hickory chair. He was staring somberly, with an immobile, thin, dark countenance, at the white plaster wall before him. Close by his right shoulder a window opened on a tranquil street, where the vermilion maple buds were splitting; and beyond the window a door was ajar on a plank sidewalk. Some shelves held crumbling yellow calf-bound volumes, a few new, with glazed black labels; at the back was a small cannon stove, with an elbow of pipe let into the plaster; a large steel engraving of Chief Justice Marshall hung on the wall; and in a farther corner a careless pile of paper, folded in dockets or tied with casual string, was collecting a grey film of neglect. A small banjo clock, with a brass-railed pediment and an elongated picture in color of the Exchange at Manchester, traced the regular, monotonous passage of minutes into hour.

The hour extended, doubled; but Alexander Hulings barely shifted a knee, a hand. At times a slight convulsive shudder passed through his shoulders, but without affecting his position or the concentrated gloom. Occasionally he swallowed dryly; his grip momentarily tightened on the chair, but his gaze was level. The afternoon waned; a sweet breath of flowering magnolia drifted in at the door; the light grew tender; and foot-

falls without sounded far away. Suddenly Hulings moved: his chair scraped harshly over the bare floor and he strode abruptly outside, where he stood facing a small tin sign nailed near the door. It read:

ALEXANDER HULINGS
COUNSELOR AT LAW

With a violent gesture, unpremeditated even by himself, he forced his hand under an edge of the sign and ripped it from its place. Then he went back and flung it bitterly, with a crumpling impact, away from him, and resumed his place at the table.

It was the end of that! He had practiced law seven, nine, years, detesting its circuitous trivialities, uniformly failing to establish a professional success, without realizing his utter legal unfitness. Before him on a scrap of paper were the figures of his past year's activities. He had made something over nine hundred dollars. And he was thirty-four years old! Those facts, seen together, dinned failure in his brain. There were absolutely no indications of a brighter future. Two other actualities added to the gloom of his thoughts: one was Hallie Flower; that would have to be encountered at once, this evening; and the other was — his health.

He was reluctant to admit any question of the latter; he had the feeling, almost a superstition, that such an admission enlarged whatever, if anything, was the matter with him. It was vague, but increasingly disturbing; he had described it with difficulty to Doctor Veneada, his only intimate among the Eastlake men, as a sensation like that a fiddlestring might experience when tightened remorselessly by a blundering hand.

"At any minute," he had said, "the damned thing must go!"

Veneada had frowned out of his whiskers.

"What you need," the doctor had decided, "is a complete change. You are strung up. Go away. Forget the law for two or three months. The Mineral is the place for you."

Alexander Hulings couldn't afford a month or more at the Mineral Spring; and he had said so with the sharpness that was one of the annoying symptoms of his condition. He had had several letters, though, throughout a number of years, from James Claypole, a cousin of his mother, asking him out to Tubal Cain, the iron forge which barely kept Claypole alive; and he might manage that — if it were not for Hallie Flower. There the conversation had come to an inevitable conclusion.

Now, in a flurry of violence that was, nevertheless, the expression of complete purpose, he had ended his practice, his only livelihood; and that would — must — end Hallie.

He had been engaged to her from the day when, together, they had, with a pretense of formality, opened his office in Eastlake. He had determined not to marry until he made a thousand dollars in a year; and, as year after

year slipped by without his accumulating that amount, their engagement had come to resemble the unemotional contact of a union without sex. Lately Hallie had seemed almost content with duties in her parental home and the three evenings weekly that Alexander spent with her in the formal propriety of a front room.

His own feelings defied analysis; but it seemed to him that, frankly surveyed, even his love for Hallie Flower had been swallowed up in the tide of irritability rising about him. He felt no active sorrow at the knowledge that he was about to relinquish all claim upon her; his pride stirred resentfully; the evening promised to be uncomfortable — but that was all.

The room swam about him in a manner that had grown hatefully familiar; he swayed in his chair; and his hands were at once numb with cold and wet with perspiration. A sinking fear fastened on him, an inchoate dread that he fought bitterly. It wasn't death from which Alexander Hulings shuddered, but a crawling sensation that turned his knees to dust. He was a slight man, with narrow shoulders and close-swinging arms, but as rigidly erect as an iron bar; his mentality was like that too, and he particularly detested the variety of nerves that had settled on him.

A form blocked the doorway, accentuating the dusk that had swiftly gathered in the office, and Veneada entered. His neckcloth was, as always, carelessly folded, and his collar hid in rolls of fat; a cloak was thrown back from a wide girth, and he wore an incongruous pair of buff linen trousers.

"What's this — mooning in the dark?" he demanded. "Thought you hadn't locked the office door. Come out; fill your lungs with the spring and your stomach with supper."

Without reply, Alexander Hulings followed the other into the street.

"I am going to Hallie's," he said in response to Veneada's unspoken query.

Suddenly he felt that he must conclude everything at once and get away; where and from what he didn't know. It was not his evening to see Hallie and she would be surprised when he came up on the step. The Flowers had supper at five; it would be over now, and Hallie finished with the dishes and free. Alexander briefly told Veneada his double decision.

"In a way," the other said, "I'm glad. You must get away for a little anyway; and you are accomplishing nothing here in Eastlake. You are a rotten lawyer, Alexander; any other man would have quit long ago; but your infernal stubbornness held you to it. You are not a small-town man. You see life in a different, a wider way. And if you could only come on something where your pig-headedness counted there's no saying where you'd reach. I'm sorry for Hallie; she's a nice woman, and you could get along well enough on nine hundred ——"

"I said I'd never marry until I made a thousand in a year," Hulings broke in, exasperated.

"Good heavens! Don't I know that?" Veneada replied. "And you

won't, you — you mule! I guess I've suffered enough from your confounded character to know what it means when you say a thing. I think you're right about this. Go up to that fellow Claypole and show him what brittle stuff iron is compared to yourself. Seriously, Alex, get out and work like the devil at a heavy job; go to bed with your back ruined and your hands raw. You know I'll miss you — means a lot to me, best friend."

A deep embarrassment was visible on Veneada; it was communicated to Alexander Hulings, and he was relieved when they drew opposite the Flowers' dwelling.

It was a narrow, high brick structure, with a portico cap, supported by cast-iron grilling, and shallow iron-railed balconies on the second story. A gravel path divided a small lawn beyond a gate guarded by two stone greyhounds. Hallie emerged from the house with an expression of mild inquiry at his unexpected appearance. She was a year older than himself, an erect, thin woman, with a pale coloring and unstirred blue eyes.

"Why, Alex," she remarked, "whatever brought you here on a Saturday?" They sat, without further immediate speech, from long habit, in familiar chairs.

He wondered how he was going to tell her. And the question, the difficulty, roused in him an astonishing amount of exasperation. He regarded her almost vindictively, with covertly shut hands. He must get hold of himself. Hallie, to whom he was about to do irreparable harm, the kindest woman in existence! But he realized that whatever feeling he had had for her was gone for ever; she had become merged indistinguishably into the thought of Eastlake; and every nerve in him demanded a total separation from the slumberous town that had witnessed his legal failure.

He wasn't, he knew, normal; his intention here was reprehensible, but he was without will to defeat it. Alexander Hulings felt the clumsy hand drawing tighter the string he had pictured himself as being; an overwhelming impulse overtook him to rush away — anywhere, immediately. He said in a rapid blurred voice:

"Hallie, this . . . our plans are a failure. That is, I am. The law's been no good; I mean, I haven't. Can't get the hand of the — the damned ——"

"Alex!" she interrupted, astonished at the expletive.

"I'm going away," he gabbled on, only half conscious of his words in waves of giddy insecurity. "Yes; for good. I'm no use here! Shot to pieces, somehow. Forgive me. Can't get a thousand."

Hallie Flower said in a tone of unpremeditated surprise:

"Then I'll never be married!"

She sat with her hands open in her lap, a wistfulness on her countenance that he found only silly. He cursed himself, his impotence, bitterly. Now he wanted to get away; but there remained an almost more impossible consummation — Hallie's parents. They were old; she was an only child.

"Your father ——" he muttered.

On his feet he swayed like a pendulum. Vise-like fingers gripped at the back of his neck. The hand of death? Incredibly he lived through a stammering, racking period, in the midst of which a cuckoo ejaculated seven idiotic notes from the fretted face of a clock.

He was on the street again; the cruel pressure was relaxed; he drew a deep breath. In his room, a select chamber with a "private" family, he packed and strapped his small leather trunk. There was nowhere among his belongings a suggestion of any souvenir of the past, anything sentimental or charged with memory. A daguerreotype of Hallie Flower, in an embossed black case lined with red plush, he ground into a shapeless fragment. Afterward he was shocked by what he had done and was forced to seek the support of a chair. He clenched his jaw, gazed with stony eyes against the formless dread about him.

He had forgotten that the next day was Sunday, with a corresponding dislocation of the train and packet service which was to take him West. A further wait until Monday was necessary. Alexander Hulings got through that too; and was finally seated with Veneada in his light wagon, behind a clattering pair of young Hambletonians, with the trunk secured in the rear. Veneada was taking him to a station on the Columbus Railroad. Though the morning had hardly advanced, and Hulings had wrapped himself in a heavy cape, the doctor had only a duster, unbuttoned, on his casual clothing.

"You know, Alex," the latter said — "and let me finish before you start to object — that I have more money than I can use. And, though I know you wouldn't just borrow any for cigars, if there ever comes a time when you need a few thousands, if you happen on something that looks good for both of us, don't fail to let me know. You'll pull out of this depression; I think you're a great man, Alex — because you are so unpleasant, if for nothing else."

The doctor's weighty hand fell affectionately on Hulings' shoulder.

Hulings involuntarily moved from the other's contact; he wanted to leave all — all of Eastlake. Once away, he was certain, his being would clarify, grow more secure. He even neglected to issue a characteristic abrupt refusal of Veneada's implied offer of assistance; though all that he possessed, now strapped in his wallet, was a meager provision for a debilitated man who had cast safety behind him.

The doctor pulled his horses in beside a small, boxlike station, on flat wooden tracks, dominated by a stout pole, to which was nailed a ladder-like succession of cross blocks.

Alexander Hulings was infinitely relieved when the other, after some last professional injunctions, drove away. Already, he thought, he felt better; and he watched, with a faint stirring of normal curiosity, the station master climb the pole and survey the mid-distance for the approaching train.

The engine finally rolled fussily into view, with a lurid black column of smoke pouring from a thin belled stack, and dragging a rocking, precarious brigade of chariot coaches scrolled in bright yellow and staring blue. It stopped, with a fretful ringing and grinding impact of coach on coach. Alexander Hulings' trunk was shouldered to a roof; and after an inspection of the close interiors he followed his baggage to an open seat above. The engine gathered momentum; he was jerked rudely forward and blinded by a cloud of smoke streaked with flaring cinders.

There was a faint cry at his back, and he saw a woman clutching a charring hole in her crinoline. The railroad journey was an insuperable torment; the diminishing crash at the stops, either at a station or where cut wood was stacked to fire the engine, the choking hot waves of smoke, the shouted confabulations between the captain and the engineer, forward on his precarious ledge — all added to an excruciating torture of Hulings' racked and shuddering nerves. His rigid body was thrown from side to side; his spine seemed at the point of splintering from the pounding of the rails.

An utter mental dejection weighed down his shattered being; it was not the past but the future that oppressed him. Perhaps he was going only to die miserably in an obscure hole; Veneada probably wouldn't tell him the truth about his condition. What he most resented, with a tenuous spark of his customary obstinate spirit, was the thought of never justifying a belief he possessed in his ultimate power to conquer circumstance, to be greatly successful.

Veneada, a man without flattery, had himself used that word "great" in connection with him.

Alexander Hulings felt dimly, even now, a sense of cold power; a hunger for struggle different from a petty law practice in Eastlake. He thought of the iron that James Claypole unsuccessfully wrought; and something in the word, its implied obduracy, fired his disintegrating mind. "Iron!" Unconsciously he spoke the word aloud. He was entirely ignorant of what, exactly, it meant, what were the processes of its fluxing and refinement; forge and furnace were hardly separated in his thoughts. But out of the confusion emerged the one concrete stubborn fact — iron!

He was drawn, at last, over a level grassy plain, at the far edge of which evening and clustered houses merged on a silver expanse of river. It was Columbus, where he found the canal packets lying in the terminal-station basin.

II

THE westbound packet, the *Hit or Miss*, started with a long horn blast and the straining of the mules at the towrope. The canal boat slipped into its placid banked waterway. Supper was being laid in the gentlemen's cabin, and Alexander Hulings was unable to secure a berth. The passen-

gers crowded at a single long table; and the low interior, steaming with food, echoing with clattering china and a ceaseless gabble of voices, confused him intolerably. He made his way to the open space at the rear. The soundless, placid movement at once soothed him and was exasperating in its slowness. He thought of his journey as an escape, an emergence from a suffocating cloud; and he raged at its deliberation.

The echoing note of a *cornet-à-piston* sounded from the deck above; it was joined by the rattle of a drum; and an energetic band swept into the strains of Zip Coon. The passengers emerged from supper and gathered on the main deck; the gayly lighted windows streamed in moving yellow bars over dark banks and fields; and they were raised or lowered on the pouring black tide of masoned locks. If it had not been for the infernal persistence of the band, Alexander Hulings would have been almost comfortable; but the music, at midnight, showed no signs of abating. Money was collected, whisky distributed; a quadrille formed forward. Hulings could see the women's crinolines, the great sleeves and skirts, dipping and floating in a radiance of oil torches. He had a place in a solid bank of chairs about the outer rail, and sat huddled in his cape. His misery, as usual, increased with the night; the darkness was streaked with immaterial flashes, disjointed visions. He was infinitely weary, and faint from a hunger that he yet could not satisfy. A consequential male at his side, past middle age, with close whiskers and a mob of seals, addressed a commonplace to him; but he made no reply. The other regarded Hulings with an arrogant surprise, then turned a negligent back. From beyond came a clear, derisive peal of girlish laughter. He heard a name — Gisela — pronounced.

Alexander Hulings' erratic thoughts returned to iron. He wondered vaguely why James Claypole had never succeeded with Tubal Cain. Probably, like so many others, he was a drunkard. The man who had addressed him moved away — he was accompanied by a small party — and another took his vacant place.

" See who that was? " he asked Hulings. The latter shook his head morosely. " Well, that," the first continued impressively, " is John Wooddrop."

Alexander Hulings had an uncertain memory of the name, connected with ——

" Yes, sir — John Wooddrop, the Ironmaster. I reckon that man is the biggest — not only the richest but the biggest — man in the state. Thousands of acres, mile after mile; iron banks and furnaces and forges and mills; hundreds of men and women . . . all his. Like a European monarch! Yes, sir; resembles that. Word's law — says ' Come here! ' or ' Go there! ' His daughter is with him too, it's clear she's got the old boy's spirit, and his lady. They get off at Harmony; own the valley; own everything about."

Harmony was the place where Hulings was to leave the canal; from

there he must drive to Tubal Cain. The vicarious boastfulness of his neighbor stirred within him an inchoate antagonism.

" There is one place near by he doesn't own," he stated sharply.

" Then it's no good," the other promptly replied. " If it was, Wooddrop would have it. It would be his or nothing — he'd see to that. His name is Me, or nobody."

Alexander Hulings' antagonism increased and illogically fastened on the Ironmaster. The other's character, as it had been stated, was precisely the quality that called to the surface his own stubborn will of self-assertion. It precipitated a condition in which he expanded, grew determined, ruthless, cold.

He imagined himself, sick and almost moneyless and bound for Claypole's failure, opposed to John Wooddrop, and got a faint thrill from the fantastic vision. He had a recurrence of the conviction that he, too, was a strong man; and it tormented him with the bitter contrast between such an image and his actual present self. He laughed aloud, a thin, shaken giggle, at his belief persisting in the face of such irrefutable proof of his failure. Nevertheless, it was firmly lodged in him, like a thorn pricking at his dissolution, gathering his scattered faculties into efforts of angry contempt at the laudation of others.

Veneada and Hallie Flower, he realized, were the only intimates he had gathered in a solitary and largely embittered existence. He had no instinctive humanity of feeling, and his observations, colored by his spleen, had not added to a small opinion of man at large. Always feeling himself to be a figure of supreme importance, he had never ceased to chafe at the small aspect he was obliged to exhibit. This mood had grown, through an uncomfortable sense of shame, to a perpetual disparagement of all other triumph and success.

Finally the band ceased its efforts, the oil lights burned dim, and a movement to the cabins proceeded, leaving him on a deserted deck. At last, utterly exhausted, he went below in search of a berth. They hung four deep about the walls, partly curtained, while the floor of the cabin was filled with clothesracks, burdened with a miscellany of outer garments. One place only was empty — under the ceiling; and he made a difficult ascent to the narrow space. Sleep was an impossibility — a storm of hoarse breathing, muttering, and sleepy oaths dinned on his ears. The cabin, closed against the outer air, grew indescribably polluted. Any former torment of mind and body was minor compared to the dragging wakeful hours that followed; a dread of actual insanity seized him.

Almost at the first trace of dawn the cabin was awakened and filled with fragmentary dressing. The deck and bar were occupied by men waiting for the appearance of the feminine passengers from their cabin forward, and breakfast. The day was warm and fine. The packet crossed a turgid river, at the mouths of other canal routes, and entered a wide pastoral valley.

Alexander Hulings sat facing a smaller, various river; at his back was a barrier of mountains, glossy with early laurel and rhododendron. His face was yellow and sunken, and his lips dry. John Wooddrop passed and repassed him, a girl, his daughter Gisela, on his arm. She wore an India muslin dress, wide with crinoline, embroidered in flowers of blue and green worsted, and a flapping rice-straw hat draped in blond lace. Her face was pointed and alert.

Once Hulings caught her glance, and he saw that her eyes seemed black and — and — impertinent.

An air of palpable satisfaction emanated from the Ironmaster. His eyes were dark too; and, more than impertinent, they held for Hulings an intolerable patronage. John Wooddrop's foot trod the deck with a solid authority that increased the sick man's smoldering scorn. At dinner he had an actual encounter with the other. The table was filling rapidly; Alexander Hulings had taken a place when Wooddrop entered with his group and surveyed the seats that remained.

"I am going to ask you," he addressed Hulings in a deep voice, "to move over yonder. That will allow my family to surround me."

A sudden unreasonable determination not to move seized Hulings. He said nothing; he didn't turn his head nor disturb his position. John Wooddrop repeated his request in still more vibrant tones. Hulings did nothing. He was held in a silent rigidity of position.

"You, sir," Wooddrop pronounced loudly, "are deficient in the ordinary courtesies of travel! And note this, Mrs. Wooddrop" — he turned to his wife — "I shall never again, in spite of Gisela's importunities, move by public conveyance. The presence of individuals like this ——"

Alexander Hulings rose and faced the older, infinitely more important man. His sunken eyes blazed with such a feverish passion that the other raised an involuntary palm.

"Individuals," he added, "painfully afflicted."

Suddenly Hulings' weakness betrayed him; he collapsed in his chair with a pounding heart and blurred vision. The incident receded, became merged in the resumption of the commonplace clatter of dinner.

Once more on deck, Alexander Hulings was aware that he had appeared both inconsequential and ridiculous, two qualities supremely detestable to his pride; and this added to his bitterness toward the Ironmaster. He determined to extract satisfaction for his humiliation. It was characteristic of Hulings that he saw himself essentially as John Wooddrop's equal; worldly circumstance had no power to impress him; he was superior to the slightest trace of the complacent inferiority exhibited by last night's casual informer.

The day waned monotonously; half dazed with weariness he heard bursts of music; far, meaningless voices; the blowing of the packet horn. He didn't go down again into the cabin to sleep, but stayed wrapped in his

cloak in a chair. He slept through the dawn and woke only at the full activity of breakfast. Past noon the boat tied up at Harmony. The Wooddrops departed with all the circumstance of worldly importance and in the stir of cracking whip and restive, spirited horses. Alexander Hulings moved unobserved, with his trunk, to the bank.

Tubal Cain, he discovered, was still fifteen miles distant, and — he had not told James Claypole of his intended arrival — no conveyance was near by. A wagon drawn by six mules with gay bells and colored streamers and heavily loaded with limestone finally appeared, going north, on which Hulings secured passage.

The precarious road followed a wooded ridge, with a vigorous stream on the right and a wall of hills beyond. The valley was largely uninhabited. Once they passed a solid, foursquare structure of stone, built against a hill, with clustered wooden sheds and a great wheel revolving under a smooth arc of water. A delicate white vapor trailed from the top of the masonry, accompanied by rapid, clear flames.

" Blue Lump Furnace," the wagon driver briefly volunteered. " Belongs to Wooddrop. But that doesn't signify anything about here. Pretty near everything's his."

Alexander Hulings looked back, with an involuntary deep interest in the furnace. The word " iron " again vibrated, almost clanged, through his mind. It temporarily obliterated the fact that here was another evidence of the magnitude, the possessions, of John Wooddrop. He was consumed by a sudden anxiety to see James Claypole's forge. Why hadn't the fool persisted, succeeded?

" Tubal Cain's in there." The mules were stopped. " What there is of it! Four bits will be enough."

He was left beside his trunk on the roadside, clouded by the dust of the wagon's departure. Behind him, in the direction indicated, the ground, covered with underbrush, fell away to a glint of water and some obscure structures. Dragging his baggage he made his way down to a long wooden shed, the length facing him open on two covered hearths, some dilapidated troughs, a suspended ponderous hammer resting on an anvil, and a miscellaneous heap of rusting iron implements — long-jawed tongs, hooked rods, sledges, and broken castings. The hearths were cold; there was not a stir of life, of activity, anywhere.

Hulings left his trunk in a clearing and explored farther. Beyond a black heap of charcoal, standing among trees, were two or three small stone dwellings. The first was apparently empty, with some whitened sacks on a bare floor; but within a second he saw through the open doorway the lank figure of a man kneeling in prayer. His foot was on the sill; but the bowed figure, turned away, remained motionless.

Alexander Hulings hesitated, waiting for the prayer to reach a speedy termination. But the other, with upraised, quivering hands, remained so

long on his knees that Hulings swung the door back impatiently. Even then an appreciable time elapsed before the man inside rose to his feet. He turned and moved forward, with an abstracted gaze in pale-blue eyes set in a face seamed and scored by time and disease. His expression was benevolent; his voice warm and cordial.

"I am Alexander Hulings," that individual briefly stated; "and I suppose you're Claypole."

The latter's condition, he thought instantaneously, was entirely described by his appearance. James Claypole's person was as neglected as the forge. His stained breeches were engulfed in scarred leather boots, and a coarse black shirt was open on a gaunt chest.

His welcome left nothing to be desired. The dwelling into which he conducted Hulings consisted of a single room, with a small shed kitchen at the rear and two narrow chambers above. There was a pleasant absence of apology for the meager accommodations. James Claypole was an entirely unaffected and simple host.

The late April evening was warm; and after a supper, prepared by Claypole, of thick bacon, potatoes and saleratus biscuit, the two men sat against the outer wall of the house. On the left Hulings could see the end of the forge shed, with the inevitable water wheel hung in a channel cut from the clear stream. The stream wrinkled and whispered along spongy banks, and a flicker hammered on a resonant limb. Hulings stated negligently that he had arrived on the same packet with John Wooddrop, and Claypole retorted:

"A man lost in the world! I tried to wrestle with his spirit, but it was harder than the walls of Jericho."

His eyes glowed with fervor. Hulings regarded him curiously. A religious fanatic! He asked:

"What's been the trouble with Tubal Cain? Other forges appear to flourish about here. This Wooddrop seems to have built a big thing with iron."

"Mammon!" Claypole stated. "Slag; dross! not this, but the Eternal World." The other failed to comprehend, and he said so irritably. "All that," Claypole specified, waving toward the forge, "takes the thoughts from the Supreme Being. Eager for the Word, and a poor speller-out of the Book, you can't spend priceless hours shingling blooms. And then the men left, one after another, because I stopped pandering to their carnal appetites. No one can indulge in rum here, in a place of mine sealed to God."

"Do you mean that whisky was a part of their pay and that you held it back?" Alexander Hulings demanded curtly. He was without the faintest sympathy for what he termed such arrant folly.

"Yes, just that; a brawling, forward crew. Wooddrop wanted to buy, but I wouldn't extend his wicked dominion, satisfy fleshly lust."

"It's a good forge, then?"

"None better! I built her mostly myself, when I was laying up the treasure that rusted; stone on stone, log on log. Heavy, slow work. The sluice is like a city wall; the anvil bedded on seven feet of oak. It's right! But if I'd known then I should have put up a temple to Jehovah."

Hulings could scarcely contain his impatience.

"Why," he ejaculated, "you might have made a fine thing out of it! Opportunity, opportunity, and you let it go by. For sheer —— "

He broke off at a steady gaze from Claypole's calm blue eyes. It was evident that he would have to restrain any injudicious characterizations of the other's belief. He spoke suddenly:

"I came up here because I was sick and had to get out of Eastlake. I left everything but what little money I had. You see — I was a failure. I'd like to stay with you a while; when perhaps I might get on my feet again. I feel easier than I have for weeks." He realized, surprised, that this was so. He had a conviction that he could sleep here, by the stream, in the still, flowering woods. "I haven't any interest in temples," he continued; "but I guess — two men — we won't argue about that. Some allowance on both sides. But I am interested in iron; I'd like to know this forge of yours backward. I've discovered a sort of hankering after the idea; just that — iron. It's a tremendous fact, and you can keep it from rusting."

III

THE following morning Claypole showed Alexander Hulings the mechanics of Tubal Cain. A faint reminiscent pride shone through the later unworldly preoccupation. He lifted the sluice gate, and the water poured through the masoned channel of the forebay and set in motion the wheel, hung with its lower paddles in the course. In the forge shed Claypole bound a connection, and the short haft of the trip hammer, caught in revolving cogs, raised a ponderous head and dropped it, with a jarring clang, on the anvil. The blast of the hearths was driven by water wind, propelled by a piston in a wood cylinder, with an air chamber for even pressure. It was all so elemental that the neglect of the last years had but spread over the forge an appearance of ill repair. Actually it was as sound as the clear oak largely used in its construction.

James Claypole's interest soon faded; he returned to his chair by the door of the dwelling, where he laboriously spelled out the periods of a battered copy of Addison's "Evidences of the Christian Religion." He broke the perusal with frequent ecstatic ejaculations; and when Hulings reluctantly returned from his study of the forge the other was again on his knees, lost in passionate prayer. Hulings grew hungry — Claypole was utterly lost in visions — cooked some bacon and found cold biscuit in the shedlike kitchen.

The afternoon passed into a tenderly fragrant twilight. The forge re-

treated, apparently through the trees, into the evening. Alexander Hulings sat regarding it with an increasing impatience; first, it annoyed him to see such a potentiality of power lying fallow, and then his annoyance ripened into an impatience with Claypole that he could scarcely contain. The impracticable ass! It was a crime to keep the wheel stationary, the hearths cold.

He had a sudden burning desire to see Tubal Cain stirring with life; to hear the beat of the hammer forging iron; to see the dark, still interior lurid with fire. He thought again of John Wooddrop, and his instinctive disparagement of the accomplishments of others mocked both them and himself. If he, Alexander Hulings, had had Claypole's chance, his beginning, he would be more powerful than Wooddrop now.

The law was a trivial foolery compared to the fashioning, out of the earth itself, of iron. Iron, the indispensable! Railroads, in spite of the popular, vulgar disbelief, were a coming great factor; a thousand new uses, refinements, improved processes of manufacture were bound to develop. His thoughts took fire and swept over him in a conflagration of enthusiasm. By heaven, if Claypole had failed he would succeed. He, too, would be an Ironmaster!

A brutal chill overtook him with the night; he shook pitiably; dark fears crept like noxious beetles among his thoughts. James Claypole sat, with his hands on his gaunt knees, gazing, it might be, at a miraculous golden city beyond the black curtain of the world. Later Hulings lay on a couch of boards, folded in coarse blankets and his cape, fighting the familiar evil sinking of his oppressed spirit. He was again cold and yet drenched with sweat . . . if he were defeated now, he thought, if he collapsed, he was done, shattered! And in his swirling mental anguish he clung to one stable, cool fact; he saw, like Claypole, a vision; but not gold — great shadowy masses of iron. Before dawn the dread receded; he fell asleep.

He questioned his companion at breakfast about the details of forging.

"The secret," the latter stated, "is — timber; wood, charcoal. It's bound to turn up; fuel famine will come, unless it is provided against. That's where John Wooddrop's light. He counts on getting it as he goes. A furnace'll burn five or six thousand cords of wood every little while, and that means two hundred or more acres. Back of Harmony, here, are miles of timber the old man won't loose up right for. He calculates no one else can profit with them and takes his own time."

"What does Wooddrop own in the valleys?"

"Well — there's Sally Furnace; the Poole Sawmill tract; the Medlar Forge and Blue Lump; the coal holes on Allan Mountain; Marta Furnace and Reeba Furnace — they ain't right hereabouts; the Lode Orebank; the Blossom Furnace and Charming Forges; Middle and Low Green Forges; the Auspacher Farm ——"

"That will do," Hulings interrupted him moodily; "I'm not an assessor."

Envy lashed his determination to surprising heights. Claypole grew uncommunicative, except for vague references to the Kingdom at hand and the dross of carnal desire. Finally, without a preparatory word, he strode away and disappeared over the rise toward the road. At supper he had not returned; there was no trace of him when, inundated with sleep, Hulings shut the dwelling for the night. All the following day Alexander Hulings expected his host; he spent the hours avidly studying the implements of forging; but the other did not appear. Neither did he the next day, nor the next.

Hulings, surprisingly happy, was entirely alone but for the hidden passage of wagons on the road and the multitudinous birds that inhabited the stream's edge, in the peaceful, increasing warmth of the days and nights. His condition slowly improved. He bought supplies at the packet station on the canal and shortly became as proficient at the stove as James Claypole. Through the day he sat in the mild sunlight or speculated among the implements of the forge. He visualized the process of iron making; the rough pigs, there were sows, too, he had gathered, lying outside the shed had come from the furnace. These were put into the hearths and melted, stirred perhaps; then — what were the wooden troughs for? — hammered, wrought on the anvil. Outside were other irregularly round pieces of iron, palpably closer in texture than the pig. The forging of them, he was certain, had been completed. There were, also, heavy bars, three feet in length, squared at each end.

Everything had been dropped apparently at the moment of James Claypole's absorbing view of another, transcending existence. Late in an afternoon — it was May — he heard footfalls descending from the road; with a sharp, unreasoning regret, he thought the other had returned. But it was a short, ungainly man with a purplish face and impressive shoulders. "Where's Jim?" he asked with a markedly German accent.

Alexander Hulings told him who he was and all he knew about Claypole.

"I'm Conrad Wishon," the newcomer stated, sinking heavily into a chair. "Did Jim speak of me — his head forgeman? No! But I guess he told you how he stopped the schnapps. Ha! James got religion. And he went away two weeks ago? Maybe he'll never be back. This" — he waved toward the forge — "means nothing to him."

"I live twenty miles up the road, and I saw a Glory-wagon coming on — an old Conestoga, with the Bible painted on the canvas, a traveling Shouter slapping the reins, and a congregation of his family staring out the back. James would take up with a thing like that in a shot. Yes, sir; maybe now you will never see him again. And your mother's cousin! There's no other kin I've heard of; and I was with him longer than the rest."

Hulings listened with growing interest to the equable flow of Conrad Wishon's statements and mild surprise.

"Things have been bad with me," the smith continued. "My wife, she

died Thursday before breakfast, and one thing and another. A son has charge of a coaling gang on Allen Mountain, but I'm too heavy for that; and I was going down to Green Forge when I thought I'd stop and see Jim. But, hell! — Jim's gone; like as not on the Glory-wagon. I can get a place at any hearth," he declared pridefully. "I'm a good forger; none better in Hamilton County. When it's shingling a loop I can show 'em all!"

"Have some supper," Alexander Hulings offered.

They sat late into the mild night, with the moonlight patterned like a grey carpet at their feet, talking about the smithing of iron. Conrad Wishon revealed the practical grasp of a life capably spent at a single task, and Hulings questioned him with an increasing comprehension.

"If you had money," Wishon explained, "we could do something right here. I'd like to work old Tubal Cain. I understand her."

The other asked: "How much would it take?"

Conrad Wishon spread out his hands hopelessly. "A lot; and then a creekful back of that! Soon as Wooddrop heard the hammer trip, he'd be around to close you down. Do it in a hundred ways — no teaming principally."

Hulings' antagonism to John Wooddrop increased perceptibly; he became obsessed by the fantastic thought of founding himself — Tubal Cain — triumphantly in the face of the established opposition. But he had nothing — no money, knowledge, or even a robust person. Yet his will to succeed in the valleys hardened into a concrete aim. . . . Conrad Wishon would be invaluable.

The latter stayed through the night and even lingered, after breakfast, into the morning. He was reluctant to leave the familiar scene of long toil. They were sitting lost in discussion when the beat of horses' hoofs was arrested on the road, and a snapping of underbrush announced the appearance of a young man with a keen, authoritative countenance.

"Mr. James Claypole?" he asked, addressing them collectively.

Alexander Hulings explained what he could of Claypole's absence.

"It probably doesn't matter," the other returned. "I was told the forge wasn't run, for some foolishness or other." He turned to go.

"What did you want with him — with Tubal Cain?" Conrad Wishon asked.

"Twenty-five tons of blooms."

"Now if this was ten years back —— "

The young man interrupted the smith, with a gesture of impatience, and turned to go. Hulings asked Conrad Wishon swiftly:

"Could it be done here? Could the men be got? And what would it cost?"

"It could," said Wishon; "they might, and a thousand dollars would perhaps see it through."

Hulings sharply called the retreating figure back. " Something more about this twenty-five tons," he demanded.

" For the Penn Rolling Mills," the other crisply replied. " We're asking for delivery in five weeks, but that might be extended a little — at, of course, a loss on the ton. The quality must be first grade."

Wishon grunted.

" Young man," he said, " blooms I made would hardly need blistering to be called steel."

" I'm Philip Grere," the newcomer stated, " of Grere Brothers, and they're the Penn Rolling Mills. We want good blooms soon as possible and it seems there's almost none loose. If you can talk iron, immediate iron, let's get it on paper; if not, I have a long way to drive."

When he had gone Conrad Wishon sat staring, with mingled astonishment and admiration, at Hulings.

" But," he protested, " you don't know nothing about it! "

" You do! " Alexander Hulings told him; he saw himself as a mind, of which Wishon formed the trained and powerful body.

" Perhaps Jim will come back," the elder man continued.

" That is a possibility," Alexander admitted. " But I am going to put every dollar I own into the chance of finishing those twenty-five tons."

The smith persisted: " But you don't know me; perhaps I'm a rascal and can't tell a puddling furnace from a chafery."

Hulings regarded him shrewdly.

" Conrad," he demanded, " can Tubal Cain do it? "

" By *Gott*," Wishon exclaimed, " she can! "

After an hour of close calculation Conrad Wishon rose with surprising agility.

" I've got enough to do besides sitting here. Tubal Cain ought to have twenty men, anyhow; perhaps I can get eight. There's Mathias Slough, a good hammerman. He broke an elbow at Charming, and Wooddrop won't have him back; but he can work still. Hance, a good nigger, is at my place, and there is another — Surrie. Haines Zerbey, too, worked at refining, but you'll need to watch his rum. Perhaps Old Man Boeshore will lend a hand, and he's got a strapping grandson — Emanuel. Jeremiah Stell doesn't know much, but he'd let you cut a finger off for a dollar." He shook his head gravely. " That is a middling poor collection."

Alexander Hulings felt capable of operating Tubal Cain successfully with a shift of blind paralytics. A conviction of power, of vast capability, possessed him. Suddenly he seemed to have become a part of the world that moved, of its creative energy; he was like a piece of machinery newly connected with the forceful driving whole. Conrad Wishon had promised to return the next day with the men he had enumerated, and Alexander opened the small scattered buildings about the forge. There were, he found, suffi-

cient living provisions for eight or ten men out of a moldering quantity of primitive bed furnishings, rusted tin, and cracked glass. But it was fortunate that the days were steadily growing warmer.

Wishon had directed him to clean out the channel of the forebay, and throughout the latter half of the day he was tearing heavy weeds from the interstices of the stones, laboring in a chill slime that soon completely covered him. He removed heavy rocks, matted dead bushes, banked mud; and after an hour he was cruelly, impossibly weary. He slipped and bruised a shoulder, cut open his cheek; but he impatiently spat out the blood trailing into his mouth, and continued working. His weariness became a hell of acute pain; without manual practice his movements were clumsy; he wasted what strength he had. Yet as his suffering increased he grew only more relentlessly methodical in the execution of his task. He picked out insignificant obstructions, scraped away grass that offered no resistance to the water power. When he had finished, the forebay, striking in at an angle from the stream to the wheel, was meticulously clean.

He stumbled into his dwelling and fell on the bed, almost instantly asleep, without removing a garment, caked with filth; and never stirred until the sun again flooded the room. He cooked and ravenously ate a tremendous breakfast, and then forced himself to walk the dusty miles that lay between Tubal Cain and the canal. His legs seemed to be totally without joints, and his spine felt like a white-hot bar. At the store about which the insignificant village of Harmony clustered he ordered and paid for a great box of supplies, later carried by an obliging teamster and himself to the forge.

Once more there, he addressed himself to digging out the slag that had hardened in the hearths. The lightest bar soon became insuperably ponderous; it wabbled in his grasp, evaded his purpose. Vicious tears streamed over his blackened countenance, and he maintained a constant audible flow of bitter invective. But even that arduous task was nearly accomplished when dark overtook him.

He stripped off his garments, dropping them where he stood, by the forge shed, and literally fell forward into the stream. The cold shock largely revived him, and he supped on huge tins of coffee and hard flitch. Immediately after, he dropped asleep as if he had been knocked unconscious by a club.

At mid-morning he heard a rattle of conveyance from the road and his name called. Above he found a wagon, without a top, filled with the sorriest collection of humanity he had ever viewed, and drawn by a dejected bony horse and a small wicked mule.

"Here they are," Conrad Wishon announced; "and Hance brought along his girl to cook."

Mathias Slough, the hammerman, was thin and grey, as if his face were covered with cobwebs; Hance, Conrad's nigger, black as an iron

bloom, was carrying upside down a squawking hen; Surrie, lighter, had a dropped jaw and hands that hung below his knees; Haines Zerbey had pale, swimming eyes, and executed a salute with a battered flat beaver hat; Old Man Boeshore resembled a basin, bowed in at the stomach, his mouth sunken on toothless gums, but there was agility in his step; and Emanuel, his grandson, a towering hulk of youth, presented a facial expanse of mingled pimples and down. Jeremiah Stell was a small, shriveled man, with dead-white hair on a smooth, pinkish countenance.

Standing aside from the nondescript assemblage of men and transient garments, Alexander Hulings surveyed them with cold determination; two emotions possessed him — one of an almost humorous dismay at the slack figures on whom so much depended; and a second, stronger conviction that he could force his purpose even from them. They were, in a manner, his first command; his first material from which to build the consequence, the success, that he felt was his true expression.

He addressed a few brief periods to them; and there was no warmth, no effort to conciliate, in his tones, his dry statement of a heavy task for a merely adequate gain. He adopted this attitude instinctively, without forethought; he was dimly conscious, as a principle, that underpaid men were more easily driven than those over-fully rewarded. And he intended to drive the men before him to the limit of their capability. They had no individual existence for Alexander Hulings, no humanity; they were merely the implements of a projection of his own; their names — Haines Zerbey, Slough — had no more significance than the terms bellows or tongs.

They scattered to the few habitations by the stream, structures mostly of logs and plaster; and in a little while there rose the odorous smoke and sputtering fat of Hance's girl's cooking. Conrad Wishon soon started the labor of preparing the forge. Jeremiah Stell, who had some slight knowledge of carpentry, was directed to repair the plunger of the water-wind apparatus. Slough was testing the beat and control of the trip hammer. Hance and Surrie carried outside the neglected heaps of iron hooks and tongs. Conrad explained to Alexander Hulings:

"I sent word to my son about the charcoal; he'll leave it at my place, but we shall have to haul it from there. Need another mule — maybe two. There's enough pig here to start, and my idea is to buy all we will need now at Blue Lump; they'll lend us a sled, so's we will have it in case old Wooddrop tries to clamp down on us. I'll go along this afternoon and see the head furnace man. It will take money."

Without hesitation, Hulings put a considerable part of his entire small capital into the other's hand. At suppertime Conrad Wishon returned with the first load of metal for the Penn Rolling Mills contract.

Later Hance produced a wheezing accordion and, rocking on his feet, drew out long, wailing notes. He sang:

" Brothers, let us leave
Bukra Land for Hayti;
There we be receive'
Grand as Lafayette."

" With changes of men," Conrad continued to Alexander Hulings, " the forges could run night and day, like customary. But with only one lot we'll have to sleep. Someone will stay up to tend the fires."

In the morning the labor of making the wrought blooms actually commenced. Conrad Wishon and Hance at one hearth, and Haines Zerbey with Surrie at the other, stood ceaselessly stirring, with long iron rods, the fluxing metal at the incandescent cores of the fires. Alexander then saw that the troughs of water were to cool the rapidly heating rods. Conrad Wishon was relentless in his insistence on long working of the iron. There were, already, muttered protests. " The dam' stuff was cooked an hour back! " But he drowned the objections in a surprising torrent of German-American cursing.

Hulings was outside the shed when he heard the first dull fall of the hammer; and it seemed to him that the sound had come from a sudden pounding of his expanded heart. He, Alexander Hulings, was making iron; his determination, his capability and will were hammering out of the stubborn raw material of earth a foothold for himself and a justification! The smoke, pouring blackly, streaked with crimson sparks, from the forge shed, sifted a fine soot on the green-white flowers of a dogwood tree. A metallic clamor rose; and Emanuel, the youth, stripped to the waist and already smeared with sweat and grime, came out for a gulping breath of unsullied air.

The characteristics of the small force soon became evident. Conrad Wishon labored ceaselessly, with an unimpaired power at fifty apparent even to Alexander's intense self-absorption. Of the others, Hance, the negro, was easily the superior; his strength was Herculean, his willingness inexhaustible. Surrie was sullen. Mathias Slough constantly grumbled at the meager provisions for his comfort and efforts; yet he was a skillful workman. When Alexander had correctly gauged Zerbey's daily dram he, too, was useful; but the others were negligible. They made the motions of labor, but force was absent.

Alexander Hulings watched with narrowed eyes. When he was present the work in the shed notably improved; all the men except Conrad avoided his implacable gaze. He rarely addressed a remark to them; he seemed withdrawn from the operation that held so much for him. Conrad Wishon easily established his dexterity at " shingling a loop."

Working off a part of a melting sow, he secured it with wide-jawed shingling tongs; and, steadying the pulsating mass on an iron plate, he sledged it into a bloom. For ten hours daily the work continued, the

hearths burned, the trip hammer fell and fell. The interior of the shed was a grimy shadow lighted with lurid flares and rose and gentian flowers of iron. Ruddy reflections slid over glistening shoulders and intent, bitter faces; harsh directions, voices, sounded like the grating of castings.

The oddly assorted team was dispatched for charcoal, and then sent with a load of blooms to the canal. Hance had to be spared, with Surrie, for that; the forge was short of labor, and Alexander Hulings joined Conrad in the working of the metal. It was, he found, exhausting toil. He was light and unskilled, and the mass on the hearth slipped continually from his stirring; or else it fastened, with a seeming spite, on his rod, and he was powerless to move it. Often he swung from his feet, straining in supreme, wrenching effort. His body burned with fatigue, his eyes were scorched by the heat of the fires; he lost count of days and nights. They merged imperceptibly one into another; he must have dreamed of his racking exertions, for apparently they never ceased.

Alexander became indistinguishable from the others; all cleanness was forgotten; he ate in a stupefaction of weariness, securing with his fingers whatever was put before him. He was engaged in a struggle the end of which was hidden in the black smoke perpetually hanging over him; in the torment of the present, an inhuman suffering to which he was bound by a tyrannical power outside his control, he lost all consciousness of the future.

The hammerman's injured arm prevented his working for two days, and Alexander Hulings cursed him in a stammering rage, before which the other was shocked and dumb. He drove Old Man Boeshore and his grandson with consideration for neither age nor youth; the elder complained endlessly, tears even slid over his corrugated face; the youth was brutally burned, but Hulings never relaxed his demands.

It was as if they had all been caught in a whirlpool, in which they fought vainly for release — the whirlpool of Alexander Hulings' domination. They whispered together, he heard fragments of intended revolt; but under his cold gaze, his thin, tight lips, they subsided uneasily. It was patent that they were abjectly afraid of him. . . . The blooms moved in a small but unbroken stream over the road to the canal.

He had neglected to secure other horses or mules; and, while waiting for a load of iron on the rough track broken from the road to the forge, the horse slid to his knees, fell over, dead — the last ounce of effort wrung from his angular frame. The mule, with his ears perpetually laid back and a raised lip, seemed impervious to fatigue; his spirit, his wickedness, persisted in the face of appalling toil. The animal's name, Hulings knew, was Alexander; he overheard Hance explaining this to Old Man Boeshore:

"That mule's bound to be Alexander; ain't nobody but an Alexander work like that mule! He's bad too; he'd lay you cold and go right on about his business."

Old Man Boeshore muttered something excessively bitter about the name Alexander.

" If you sh'd ask me," he stated, " I'd tell you that he ain't human. He's got a red light in his eye, like —— "

Hulings gathered that this was not still directed at the mule.

More than half of the order for the Penn Rolling Mills had been executed and lay piled by the canal. He calculated the probable time still required, the amount he would unavoidably lose through the delay of faulty equipment and insufficient labor. If James Claypole came back now, he thought, and attempted interference, he would commit murder. It was evening, and he was seated listlessly, with his chair tipped back against the dwelling he shared with Conrad Wishon. The latter, close by, was bowed forward, his head, with a silvery gleam of faded hair, sunk on his breast. A catbird was whistling an elaborate and poignant song, and the invisible stream passed with a faint, choked whisper.

" We're going to have trouble with that girl of Hance's," Wishon pronounced suddenly; " she has taken to meeting Surrie in the woods. If Hance comes on them there will be wet knives! "

Such mishaps, Alexander Hulings knew, were an acute menace to his success. The crippling or loss of Hance might easily prove fatal to his hopes; the negro, immensely powerful, equable, and willing, was of paramount importance.

" I'll stop that! " he declared. But the trouble developed before he had time to intervene.

He came on the two negroes the following morning, facing each other, with, as Conrad had predicted, drawn knives. Hance stood still; but Surrie, with bent knees and the point of his steel almost brushing the grass, moved about the larger man. Hulings at once threw himself between them.

" What damned nonsense's this? " he demanded. " Get back to the team, Hance, and you, Surrie, drop your knife! "

The former was on the point of obeying, when Surrie ran in with a sweeping hand. Alexander Hulings jumped forward in a cold fury and felt a sudden numbing slice across his cheek. He had a dim consciousness of blood smearing his shoulder; but all his energy was directed on the stooped figure falling away from his glittering rage.

" Get out! " he directed in a thin, evil voice. " If you are round here in ten minutes I'll blow a hole through your skull! "

Surrie was immediately absorbed by the underbrush.

Hulings had a long diagonal cut from his brow across and under his ear. It bled profusely, and as his temper receded faintness dimmed his vision. Conrad Wishon blotted the wound with cobwebs; a cloth, soon stained, was bound about Alexander's head, and after dinner he was again in the forge, whipping the flagging efforts of his men with a voice like a thin leather thong. If the labor were delayed, he recognized, the contract would not be

filled. The workmen were wearing out, like the horse. He moved young Emanuel to the hauling with Hance, the wagon now drawn by three mules. The hammerman's injured arm had grown inflamed, and he was practically one-handed in his management of the trip hammer.

While carrying a lump of iron to the anvil the staggering, ill-assorted group with the tongs dropped their burden, and stood gazing stupidly at the fallen, glowing mass. They were hardly revived by Hulings' lashing scorn. He had increased Haines Zerbey's daily dram, but the drunkard was now practically useless. Jeremiah Stell contracted an intermittent fever; and, though he still toiled in the pursuit of his coveted wage, he was of doubtful value.

Alexander Hulings' body had become as hard as Conrad's knotted forearm. He ate huge amounts of half-cooked pork, washed hastily down by tin cups of black coffee, and fell into instant slumber when the slightest opportunity offered. His face was matted by an unkempt beard; his hands, the pale hands of an Eastlake lawyer, were black, like Hance's, with palms of leather. He surveyed himself with curious amusement in a broken fragment of looking-glass nailed to the wall; the old Hulings, pursued by inchoate dread, had vanished. . . . In his place was Alexander Hulings, a practical iron man! He repeated the descriptive phrase aloud, with an accent of arrogant pride. Later, with an envelope from the Penn Rolling Mills, he said it again, with even more confidence; he held the pay for the blooms which he had — it seemed in another existence — promised to deliver.

He stood leaning on a tree before the forge; within, Conrad Wishon and Hance were piling the metal hooks with sharp, ringing echoes. All the others had vanished magically, at once, as if from an exhausted spell. Old Man Boeshore had departed with a piping implication, supported by Emanuel, his grandson.

Alexander Hulings was reviewing his material situation. It was three hundred and thirty dollars better than it had been on his arrival at Tubal Cain. In addition to that he had a new store of confidence, of indomitable pride, vanity, a more actual support. He gazed with interest toward the near future, and with no little doubt. It was patent that he could not proceed as he had begun; such combinations could not be forced a second time. He intended to remain at James Claypole's forge, conducting it as though it were his own — for the present, anyhow — but he should have to get an efficient working body; and many additions were necessary — among them a blacksmith shop. He had, with Conrad Wishon, the conviction that Claypole would not return.

More capital would be necessary. He was revolving this undeniable fact when, through the lush June foliage, he saw an open carriage turn from the road and descend to the forge clearing. It held an erect, trimly whiskered form and a negro driver. The former was John Wooddrop. He gazed with surprise, that increased to a recognition, a memory, of Alexander Hulings.

" Jim Claypole? " he queried.

" Not here," Hulings replied, even more laconically.

" Nonsense! I'm told he's been running Tubal Cain again. Say to him — and I've no time to dawdle — that John Wooddrop's here."

" Well, Claypole's not," the other repeated. " He's away. I'm running this forge — Alexander Hulings."

Wooddrop's mouth drew into a straight hard line from precise whisker to whisker. " I have been absent," he said finally. It was palpably an explanation, almost an excuse. Conrad Wishon appeared from within the forge shed. " Ah, Conrad! " John Wooddrop ejaculated pleasantly. " Glad to find you at the hearth again. Come and see me in the morning."

" I think I'll stay here," the forgeman replied, " now Tubal Cain's working."

" Then, in a week or so," the Ironmaster answered imperturbably.

All Alexander Hulings' immaterial dislike of Wooddrop solidified into a concrete, vindictive enmity. He saw the beginning of a long, bitter, stirring struggle.

IV

" THAT's about it! " Conrad Wishon affirmed. They were seated by the doorway of the dwelling at Tubal Cain. It was night, and hot; and the heavy air was constantly fretted by distant, vague thunder. Alexander Hulings listened with pinched lips.

" I saw Derek, the founder at Blue Lump, and ordered the metal; then he told me that Wooddrop had sent word not to sell a pig outside his own forges. That comes near closing us up. I misdoubt that we could get men, anyhow — not without we went to Pittsburgh; and that would need big orders; big money. The old man's got us kind of shut in here, with only three mules and one wagon — we couldn't make out to haul any distance; and John Wooddrop picks up all the loose teams. It looks bad, that's what it does. No credit, too; I stopped at Harmony for some forge hooks, and they wouldn't let me take them away until you had paid. A word's been dropped there likewise."

Hulings could see, without obvious statement, that his position was difficult; it was impossible seemingly, with his limited funds and equipment, to go forward and — no backward course existed: nothing but a void, ruin, the way across which had been destroyed. He turned with an involuntary dread from the fleeting contemplation of the past, mingled with monotony and suffering, and set all his cold, passionate mind on the problem of his future. He would, he told himself, succeed with iron here. He would succeed in spite of John Wooddrop — no, because of the Ironmaster; the latter increasingly served as an actual object of comparison, an incentive, and a deeply involved spectator.

He lost himself in a gratifying vision, when Conrad's voice, shattering

the facile heights he had mounted, again fastened his attention on the exigencies of the present.

"A lot of money!" the other repeated. "I guess we'll have to shut down; but I'd almost rather drive mules on the canal than go to John Wooddrop."

Hulings declared: "You'll do neither, and Tubal Cain won't shut down!" He rose, turned into the house.

"What's up?" Wishon demanded at the sudden movement.

"I'm going after money," Hulings responded from within — "enough. A packet is due east before dawn."

If the canal boat had seemed to go slowly on his way to Harmony, it appeared scarcely to stir on his return. There was no immediate train connection at Columbus, and he footed the uneven shaded walks in an endless pattern, unconscious of houses, trees, or passing people, lost in the rehearsal of what he had to say, until the horn of an immediate departure summoned him to a seat in a coach.

The candles at each end sent a shifting, pale illumination over the cramped interior, voluminous skirts and prodigiously whiskered countenances. Each delay increased his impatience to a muttering fury; it irked him that he was unable to declare himself, Alexander Hulings, to the train captain, and by the sheer bulk of that name force a more rapid progress.

Finally in Eastlake, Veneada gazed at him out of a silent astonishment.

"You say you're Alex Hulings!" the doctor exclaimed. "Some of you seems to be; but the rest is — by heaven, iron! I'll admit now I was low about you when you left, in April; I knew you had gimp, and counted on it; however ——" The period expired in a wondering exhalation. Veneada pounded on his friend's chest, dug into his arm. "A horse!" he declared.

Alexander Hulings impatiently withdrew from the other's touch.

"Veneada," he said, "once you asked me to come to you if I wanted money, if I happened on a good thing. I said nothing at the time, because I couldn't picture an occasion when I'd do such a thing. Well — it's come. I need money, and I'm asking you for it. And, I warn you, it will be a big sum. If you can't manage it, I must go somewhere else; I'd go to China, if necessary — I'd stop people, strangers, on the street.

"A big sum," Hulings reiterated somberly; "perhaps ten, perhaps twenty, thousand. Not a loan," he added immediately, "but an investment — an investment in me. You must come out to Harmony. I can't explain: it wouldn't sound convincing in Eastlake. In the valleys, at Tubal Cain, the thing will be self-evident. I have made a beginning with practically nothing; and I can go on. But it will require capital, miles of forest, furnaces built, Pittsburgh swept bare of good men. No," he held up a hardened, arresting palm, "don't attempt to discuss it now. Come out to Tubal Cain and see; learn about John Wooddrop and how to turn iron into specie."

At the end of the week there were three chairs canted against the stone wall of the little house by the stream that drove Tubal Cain Forge. Conrad Wishon, with a scarlet undershirt open on a broad, hairy chest, listened with wonderment to the sharp periods of Alexander Hulings and Veneada; incredulously he heard mammoth sums of money estimated, projected, dismissed as commonplace. Veneada said:

"I've always believed in your ability, Alex; all that I questioned was the opportunity. Now that has gone; the chance is here. You've got those steel-wire fingers of yours about something rich, and you will never let go. It sounds absurd to go up against this Wooddrop, a despot and a firmly established power; anyone might well laugh at me, but I feel a little sorry for the older man. He doesn't know you.

"You haven't got insides, sympathies, weaknesses, like the others of us; the thing is missing in you that ordinarily betrays human men into slips; yes — compassion. You are not pretty to think about, Alex; but I suppose power never really is. You know I've got money and you know, too, that you can have it. As safe with you as in a bank vault!"

"We'll go back to Eastlake tomorrow," Hulings decided, "lay out our plans, and draw up papers. We'll buy the loose timber quietly through agents; I'll never appear in any of it. After that we can let out the contracts for two furnaces. I don't know anything about them now; but I shall in a week. Wishon had better live on here, pottering about the forge, until he can be sent to Pittsburgh after workmen. His pay will start tomorrow."

"What about Tubal Cain, and that fellow — what's his name?"

"Claypole, James. I'll keep a record of what his forge makes, along with mine, and bank it. Common safety. Then I must get over to New York, see the market there, men. I have had letters from an anchor foundry in Philadelphia. There are nail factories, locomotive shops, stove plate, to furnish. A hundred industries. I'll have them here in time — rolling mills you will hear back in the mountains. People on the packets will see the smoke of my furnaces — Alexander Hulings' iron!"

"You might furnish me with a pass, so that I could occasionally walk through and admire," Veneada said dryly.

Hulings never heard him.

"I'll have a mansion," he added abstractedly, "better than Wooddrop's, with more rooms ——"

"All full, I suppose, of little glorious Hulingses!" the doctor interrupted.

Alexander regarded him unmoved. His thoughts suddenly returned to Hallie Flower. He saw her pale, strained face, her clasped hands: he heard the thin echo of her mingled patience and dismay: "Then I'll never be married!" There was no answering stir of regret, remorse: she slipped for ever out of his consciousness, as if she had been a shadow vanishing before a flood of hard, white light.

V

GREATLY to Alexander Hulings' relief, Doctor Veneada never considered the possibility of a partnership; it was as far from one man's wish, for totally different reasons, as from the other's.

"No, no, Alex," he declared; "I couldn't manage it. Some day, when you were out of the office, the widow or orphan would come in with the foreclosure, and I would tear up the papers. Seriously, I won't do — I'm fat and easy and lazy. My money would be safer with me carefully removed from the scene."

In the end Alexander protected Veneada with mortgages on the timber and land he secured about Harmony through various agents and under different names. Some of the properties he bought outright, but in the majority he merely purchased options on the timber. His holdings in the latter finally extended in a broad, irregular belt about the extended local industries of John Wooddrop. It would be impossible for the latter, when, in perhaps fifteen years, he had exhausted his present forests, to cut an acre of wood within practicable hauling distance. This accomplished, a momentary grim satisfaction was visible on Hulings' somber countenance.

He had, however, spent all the money furnished by Doctor Veneada, without setting the foundations of the furnaces and forges he had projected, and he decided not to go to his friend for more. There were two other possible sources of supply: allied iron industries — the obvious recourse — and the railroads. The latter seemed precarious; everywhere people, and even print, were ridiculing the final usefulness of steam traffic; it was judged unfit for heavy and continuous hauling — a toy of inventors and fantastic dreaming; canals were the obviously solid means of transportation. But Alexander Hulings became fanatical overnight in his belief in the coming empire of steam.

With a small carpetbag, holding his various deeds and options, and mentally formulating a vigorous expression of his opinions and projections, he sought the doubting capital behind the Columbus Transportation Line. When, a month later, he returned to Tubal Cain, it was in the company of an expert industrial engineer, and with credit sufficient for the completion of his present plans. He had been gone a month, but he appeared older by several years. Alexander Hulings had forced from reluctant sources, from men more wily, if less adamantine, than himself, what he desired; but in return he had been obliged to grant almost impossibly favorable contracts and preferences. A tremendous pressure of responsibility had gathered about him; but under it he was still erect, coldly confident, and carried himself with the special pugnacity of small, vain men.

On a day in early June, a year from the delivery of his first contract at Tubal Cain, he stood in a fine rain at the side of a light road wagon, drawn, like John Wooddrop's, by two sweeping young horses, held by a negro, and

watched the final courses of his new furnace. The furnace itself, a solid structure of unmasoned stone, rose above thirty feet, narrowed at the top almost to half the width of its base. Directly against its face and hearth was built the single high interior of the cast house, into which the metal would be run on a sand pig bed to harden into commercial iron.

On the hill rising abruptly at the back was the long wall of the coal house, with an entrance and runway leading to the opening at the top of the furnace stack. Lower down, the curving artificial channel of the forebay swept to where the water would fall on a ponderous overshot wheel and drive the great tilted bellows that blasted the furnace.

The latter, Alexander knew, must have a name. Most furnaces were called after favorite women; but there were no such sentimental objects in his existence. He recalled the name of the canal packet that had first drawn him out to Harmony — the *Hit or Miss*. No casual title such as that would fit an enterprise of his. He thought of Tubal Cain, and then of Jim Claypole. He owed the latter something; and yet he wouldn't have another man's name. . . . Conrad Wishon had surmised that the owner of Tubal Cain had vanished — like Elijah — on a Glory-wagon. That was it — Glory Furnace! He turned and saw John Wooddrop leaning forward out of his equipage, keenly studying the new buildings.

" That's a good job," the Ironmaster allowed; " but it should be, built by Henry Bayard, the first man in the country. It ought to do very well for five or six years."

" Fifty," Hulings corrected him.

John Wooddrop's eyes were smiling.

" It's all a question of charcoal," he explained, as Wishon had, long before. " To be frank, I expect a little difficulty myself, later. It is surprising how generally properties have been newly bought in the county. I know, because lately I, too, have been reaching out. Practically all the available stuff has been secured. Thousands of acres above you, here, have been taken by a company, hotel — or something of the sort."

" The Venealic Company," Hulings said; and then, in swelling pride, he added: " That's me! " Wooddrop's gaze hardened. Alexander Hulings thought the other's face grew paler. His importance, his sense of accomplishment, of vindication, completely overwhelmed him. " And beyond, it is me! " he cried. " And back of that, again! " He made a wide, sweeping gesture with his arm. " Over there; the Hezekiah Mills tract — that's me too; and the East purchase, and on and round. Fifty! This Glory Furnace, and ten others, could run on for a century.

" You've been the big thing here — even in the state. You are known on canal boats, people point you out; yes, and patronize me. You did that yourself — you and your women. But it is over: I'm coming now, and John Wooddrop's going. You are going with those same canal boats, and Alexander Hulings is rising with the railroads."

He pounded himself on the chest, and then suddenly stopped. It was the only impassioned speech, even in the disastrous pursuit of the law, that he had ever made; and it had an impotent, foolish ring in his ear, his deliberate brain. He instantly disowned all that part of him which had betrayed his ordinary silent caution into such windy boasting. Hulings was momentarily abashed before the steady scrutiny of John Wooddrop.

"When I first saw you," the latter pronounced, "I concluded that you were unbalanced. Now I think that you are a maniac!"

He spoke curtly to his driver, and was sharply whirled away through the grey-green veil of rain and foliage. Hulings was left with an aggravated discontent and bitterness toward the older man, who seemed to have the ability always to place him in an unfavorable light.

VI

Doctor Veneada returned for the first run of metal from Glory Furnace; there were two representatives of the other capital invested, and, with Alexander Hulings, Conrad Wishon, and some local spectators, they stood in the gloom of the cast house waiting for the founder to tap the clay sealing of the hearth. Suddenly there was a rush of crackling white light, pouring sparks, and the boiling liquid flooded out, rapidly filling the molds radiating from the channels stamped in the sand bed. The incandescent iron flushed from silver to darker, warmer tones.

A corresponding warmth ran through Alexander Hulings' body; Glory Furnace was his; it had been conceived by him and his determination had brought it to an actuality. He would show Wooddrop a new type of "maniac." This was the second successful step in his move against the Ironmaster, in the latter's own field. Then he realized that he, too, might now be called Ironmaster. He directed extensive works operated under his name; he, Hulings, was the head! Already there were more than a hundred men to do what he directed, go where he wished. The feeling of power, of consequence, quickened through him. Alexander held himself, if possible, more rigidly than before; he followed every minute turn of the casting, tersely admonishing a laborer.

He was dressed with the utmost care; a marked niceness of apparel now distinguished him. His whiskers were closely trimmed, his hair brushed high under a glossy tile hat; he wore checked trousers, strapped on glazed Wellington boots, a broadcloth coat, fitted closely to his waist, with a deep rolling collar; severe neckcloth, and a number of seals on a stiff twill waistcoat. Veneada, as always, was carelessly garbed in wrinkled silk and a broad planter's hat. It seemed to Alexander that the other looked conspicuously older than he had only a few months back; the doctor's face was pendulous, the porches beneath his eyes livid.

manufacture. The younger Wishon, who had followed his father into Alexander's service, now came down from the charcoal stacks in a great sectional wagon drawn by six mules, collared in bells and red streamers. The pigs were sledged in endless procession from Glory, and then from a second furnace, to the forges that reached along the creek in each direction from Tubal Cain. The latter was worked as vigorously as possible, but Alexander conducted its finances in a separate, private column; all the profit he banked to the credit of James Claypole. He did this not from a sense of equity, but because of a deeper, more obscure feeling, almost a superstition, that such acknowledgment of the absent man's unwitting assistance was a safeguard of further good fortune.

The months fled with amazing rapidity; it seemed to him that one day the ground was shrouded in snow, and on the next the dogwood was blooming. No man in all his properties worked harder or through longer hours than Alexander; the night shift at a forge would often see him standing grimly in the lurid reflections of the hearths; charcoal burners, eating their flitch and potatoes on an out-lying mountain, not infrequently heard the beat of his horse's hoofs on the soft moss, his domineering voice bullying them for some slight oversight. He inspired everywhere a dread mingled with grudging admiration; it was known that he forced every possible ounce of effort from workman and beast.

Nevertheless, toward the end of the third summer of his success he contracted a lingering fever, and he was positively commanded to leave his labors for a rest and change. Wrapped in a shawl, he sat on the porch of the house he had commenced building, on a rise overlooking the eddying smoke of his industries, and considered the various places that offered relaxation; he could go to the sea, at Long Branch, or to Saratoga, the gayety and prodigality of which were famous. . . . But his thought returned to his collapse four years before; he heard Veneada counseling him to take the water of the Mineral Springs. He had been too poor then for the Mineral; had he gone there, he would have arrived unnoticed. By heaven, he would go there now! It was, he knew, less fashionable than the other places; its day had been twenty, thirty years before. But it represented once more his progress, his success; and, in the company of his personal servant, his leather boxes strapped at the back of his lightest road wagon, he set out the following morning.

Almost sixty miles of indifferent roads lay before him; and, though he covered, in his weakened condition, far more than half the distance by evening, he was forced to stay overnight at a roadside tavern. The way was wild and led through narrow, dark valleys, under the shadow of uninhabited ridges, and through swift fords. Occasionally he passed great, slow Conestoga wagons, entrained for the West; leather-hooded, ancient vehicles; and men on horses.

The wagon broke suddenly into the smooth, green valley that held the

Mineral Springs. Against a western mountain were grouped hotels; a bridge, crossing a limpid stream; pointed kiosks in the Chinese taste; and red gravel walks. The hotel before which Alexander stopped — a prodigiously long, high structure painted white — had a deep porch across its face with slender columns towering up unbroken to the roof and festooned with trumpet flowers. A bell rang loudly for dinner; and there was a colorful flow of crinoline over the porch, a perfumed flowery stir, through which he impatiently made his way, followed by negro boys with his luggage.

Within, the office was high and bare, with a sweeping staircase, and wide doors opened on a lofty thronged dining room. Above, he was led through interminable narrow corridors, past multitudinous closed doors, to a closet-like room completely filled by a narrow bed, a chair, and a corner wash-stand; this, with some pegs in the calcined wall and a bell rope, completed the provisions for his comfort. His toilet was hurried, for he had been warned that extreme promptness at meals was more than desirable; and, again below, he was led by a pompous negro between long, crowded tables to a place at the farther end. The din of conversation and clatter of dishes were deafening. In the ceiling great connected fans were languidly pulled by black boys, making a doubtful circulation.

His dinner was cold and absurdly inadequate, but the table claret was palatable. And, after the isolation of Tubal Cain, the droves of festive people absorbed him. Later, at the bar, he came across an acquaintance, a railroad director, who pointed out to Alexander what notables were present. There was an Englishman, a lord; there was Bartram Ainscough, a famous gambler; there — Alexander's arm was grasped by his companion.

" See that man — no, farther — dark, in a linen suit? Well, that's Partridge Sinnox, of New Orleans." He grew slightly impatient at Hulings' look of inquiry. " Never heard of him! Best-known pistol shot in the States. A man of the highest honor. Will go out on the slightest provocation." His voice lowered. " He's said to have killed twelve — no less. His companion there, from Louisiana too, never leaves him. Prodigiously rich: canefields."

Alexander Hulings looked with small interest at the dueller and his associate. The former had a lean, tanned face, small black eyes that held each a single point of light, and long, precise hands. Here, Alexander thought, was another form of publicity, different from his own. As always, his lips tightened in a faint contempt at pretensions other than his, or threatening to his preëminence. Sinnox inspired none of the dread or curiosity evident in his companion; and he turned from him to the inspection of a Pennsylvania coal magnate.

The colonnade of the hotel faced another cultivated ridge, on which terraced walks mounted to a pavilion at the crest; and there, through the late afternoon, he rested and gazed down at the Springs or over to the village beyond. Alexander was wearier than he had supposed; the iron seemed sud-

denly insupportably burdensome; a longing for lighter, gayer contacts possessed him. He wanted to enter the relaxations of the Springs.

Dancing, he knew, was customary after supper; and he lingered over a careful toilet — bright blue coat, tight black trousers, and flat, glistening slippers, with a soft cambric ruffle. Alexander Hulings surveyed his countenance in a scrap of mirror, and saw, with mingled surprise and discontent, that he — like Veneada — bore unmistakable signs of age, marks of strife and suffering; his whiskers had an evident silvery sheen. Life, receding unnoticed, had set him at the verge of middle age. But at least, he thought, his was not an impotent medial period; if, without material success, he had unexpectedly seen the slightly drawn countenance meeting him in the mirror, he would have killed himself. He realized that coldly. He could never have survived an established nonentity. As it was, descending the stairs to supper, immaculate and disdainful, he was upheld by the memory of his accomplishments, his widening importance, weight. He actually heard a whispered comment: " Hulings, iron."

VII

AFTER supper the furnishings of the dining room were swept aside by a troop of waiters, while a number of the latter, with fiddles and cornets, were grouped on a table, over which a green cloth had been spread. With the inevitable scraping of strings and preliminary unattended dance, a quadrille was formed. Alexander, lounging with other exactly garbed males in the doorway, watched with secret envy the participants in the figures gliding from one to another. As if from another life he recalled their names; they were dancing Le Pantalon now; La Poulee would follow; then the Pastorale and L'Eté.

Above the spreading gauze, the tulle and glacé silks of the women, immense candelabra of glass pendants and candles shone and glittered; the rustle of crinoline, of light passing feet, sounded below the violins and blown cornets, the rich husky voices calling the changes of the quadrille.

He was troubled by an obscure desire to be a center of interest, of importance, for the graceful feminine world about him. Sinnox, the man from New Orleans, was bowing profoundly to his partner; a figure broke up into a general boisterous gallopading — girls, with flushed cheeks, swinging curls, spun from masculine shoulder to shoulder. The dance ended, and the floating, perfumed skirts passed him in a soft flood toward the porch.

Without, the colonnade towered against a sky bright with stars; the night was warm and still. Alexander Hulings was lonely; he attempted to detain the acquaintance met in the bar, but the other, bearing a great bouquet of rosebuds in a lace-paper cone, hurried importantly away. A subdued barytone was singing: " Our Way Across the Mountain, Ho! "

The strains of a waltz, the Carlotta-Grisi, drifted out, and a number of couples answered its invitation.

A group at the iron railing across the foot of the colonnade attracted his attention by its excessive gayety. The center, he saw, was a young woman, with smooth bandeaux and loops of black hair, and a goya lily caught below her ear. She was not handsome, but her features were animated, and her shoulders as finely white and sloping as an alabaster vase.

It was not this that held his attention, but a sense of familiarity, a feeling that he had seen her before. He walked past the group, without plan, and, meeting her gaze, bowed awkwardly in response to a hesitating but unmistakable smile of recognition. Alexander stopped, and she imperiously waved him to join the number about her. He was in a cold dread of the necessity of admitting, before so many, that he could not recall her name; but obviously all that she desired was to swell the circle of her admirers, for, beyond a second nod, she ignored him.

The Southerner was at her shoulder, maintaining a steady flow of repartee, and Alexander envied him his assured presence, his dark, distinguished appearance. The man who had been indicated as Sinnox' companion stood by Hulings, and the latter conceived a violent prejudice for the other's meager yellow face and spiderlike hand, employed with a cheroot.

Alexander hoped that somebody would repeat the name of the girl who had spoken to him. A woman did, but only in the contracted, familiar form of Gisela. . . . Gisela — he had heard that too. Suddenly she affected to be annoyed; she arched her fine brows and glanced about, her gaze falling upon Alexander Hulings. Before he was aware of her movement a smooth white arm was thrust through his; he saw the curve of a powdered cheek, an elevated chin.

"Do take me out of this!" she demanded. "New Orleans molasses is — well, too thick."

Obeying the gentle pressure of her arm, he led her down the steps to the graveled expanse below. She stopped by a figure of the Goddess of Health, in filigree on mossy rocks, pouring water from an urn. Her gown was glazed green muslin, with a mist of white tulle, shining with particles of silver. The goya lily exhaled a poignant scent.

"I didn't really leave because of Mr. Sinnox," she admitted; "a pin was scratching, and I was devoured with curiosity to know who you were, where I had met ——"

Suddenly, in a flash of remembered misery, of bitter resentment, he recognized her — Gisela, John Wooddrop's daughter. The knowledge pinched at his heart with malicious fingers; the starry night, the music and gala attire, his loneliness had betrayed him into an unusual plasticity of being. He delayed for a long breath, and then said dryly: "I'm Alexander Hulings."

"Not ——" she half cried, startled. She drew away from him, and her

face grew cold. In the silence that followed he was conscious of the flower's perfume and the insistent drip of the water falling from the urn. "But I haven't met you at all," she said; "I don't in the least know you." Her attitude was insolent, and yet she unconsciously betrayed a faint curiosity. "I think you lacked delicacy to join my friends — to bring me out here!"

"I didn't," he reminded her; "you brought me."

Instantly he cursed such clumsy stupidity. Her lower lip protruded disdainfully.

"Forgive me," she said, dropping a curtsy, "but I needn't keep you."

She swept away across the gravel and up the stairs to the veranda. It was evident that the group had not separated; for almost immediately there rose a concerted laughter, a palpable mockery, drifting out to Alexander.

His face was hot, his hands clenched in angry resentment. More than anything else, he shrank from being an object of amusement, of gibes. It was necessary to his self-esteem to be met with grave appreciation.

This was his first experience of the keen assaults of social weapons, and it inflicted on him an extravagant suffering. His instinct was to retire farther into the night, only to return to his room when the hotel was dark, deserted. But a second, stronger impulse sent him deliberately after Gisela Wooddrop, up the veranda stairs, and rigidly past the group gazing at him with curious mirth.

An oil flare fixed above them shone down on the lean, saturnine countenance of Partridge Sinnox. The latter, as he caught Alexander Hulings' gaze, smiled slightly.

That expression followed Alexander to his cramped room; it mocked him as he viciously pulled at the bell rope, desiring his servant; it was borne up to him on the faint strains of the violins. And in the morning it clouded his entire outlook. Sinnox' smile expressed a contempt that Alexander Hulings' spirit could not endure. From the first he had been resentful of the Southerner's cheap prestige. He added the qualifying word as he descended to breakfast.

Sinnox, as a dueller, roused Hulings' impatience; he had more than once faced impromptu death — iron bars in the hands of infuriated employees, and he had overborne them with a cold phrase. This theatrical playing with pistols — cheap! Later, in the crowded bar, he was pressed elbow to elbow with Sinnox and his companion; and he automatically and ruthlessly cleared sufficient space for his comfort. Sinnox' associate said, in remonstrance:

"Sir, there are others — perhaps more considerable."

"Perhaps!" Alexander Hulings carelessly agreed.

Sinnox gazed down on him with narrowed eyes.

"I see none about us," he remarked, "who would have to admit the qualification."

Alexander's bitterness increased, became aggressive. He met Sinnox' gaze with a stiff, dangerous scorn:

"In your case, at least, it needn't stand."

"Gentlemen," the third cried, "no more, I beg of you." He grasped Alexander Hulings' arm. "Withdraw!" he advised. "Mr. Sinnox' temper is fatal. Beyond a certain point it cannot be leashed. It has caused great grief. Gentlemen, I beg ——"

"Do you mean ——" Sinnox demanded, and his face was covered by an even, dark flush to the sweep of his hair.

"Cheap!" Alexander's voice was sudden and unpremeditated.

The other's temper rose in a black passion; he became so enraged that his words were mere unintelligible gasps. His hand shook so that he dropped a glass of rock-and-rye splintering on the floor. "At once!" he finally articulated. "Scurvy ——"

"This couldn't be helped," his companion proclaimed, agitated. "I warned the other gentleman. Mr. Sinnox is not himself in a rage, his record is well known. He was elbowed aside by ——"

"Alexander Hulings!" that individual pronounced.

He was aware of the gaze of the crowding men about him; already he was conscious of an admiration roused by the mere fact of his facing a notorious bully. Cheap! The director joined him.

"By heavens, Hulings, you're in dangerous water. I understand you have no family."

"None!" Alexander stated curtly.

Illogically he was conscious of the scent of a goya lily. Sinnox was propelled from the bar, and his friend reappeared and conferred with the director.

"At once!" Hulings heard the former announce. "Mr. Sinnox . . . unbearable!"

"Have you a case of pistols?" the director asked. "Mr. Sinnox offers his. I believe there is a quiet opening back of the bathhouse. But my earnest advice to you is to withdraw; you will be very little blamed; this man is notorious, a professional fighter. You have only to say ——"

Cheap! Alexander thought again, fretful at having been involved in such a ridiculous affair. He was even more deliberate than usual; but, though he was certain of his entire normality, the faces about him resembled small, bobbing balloons.

Alexander finished his drink — surprised to find himself still standing by the bar — and silently followed the director through the great hall of the hotel out on to the veranda, and across the grass to a spot hidden from the valley by the long, low bulk of the bathing house.

Sinnox and his companion, with a polished mahogany box, were already there; a small, curious group congregated in the distance. Sinnox' friend produced long pistols with silken-brown barrels and elegantly carved ivory

stocks, into which he formally rammed powder and balls. Alexander Hulings was composed; but his fingers were cold, slightly numb, and he rubbed them together angrily. Not for an instant did he think that he might be killed; other curious, faint emotions assailed him — long-forgotten memories of distant years; Veneada's kindly hand on his shoulder; the mule called Alexander because of its aptitude for hard labor; John Wooddrop's daughter.

He saw that the pistols had been loaded; their manipulator stood with them, butts extended, in his grasp. He began a preamble of customary explanation, which he ended by demanding, for his principal, an apology from Alexander Hulings. The latter, making no reply, was attracted by Sinnox' expression of deepening passion; the man's face, he thought, positively was black. Partridge Sinnox' entire body was twitching with rage. . . . Curious, for a seasoned, famous dueller!

Suddenly Sinnox, with a broken exclamation, swung on his heel, grasped one of the pistols in his second's hands, and discharged it point-blank at Alexander Hulings.

An instant confused outcry rose. Alexander heard the term " Insane! " pronounced, as if in extenuation, by Sinnox' friend. The latter held the remaining, undischarged pistol out of reach; the other lay on the ground before Partridge Sinnox. Alexander's face was as grey as granite.

" That was the way he did it," he unconsciously pronounced aloud.

He wondered slowly at the fact that he had been unhit. Then, with his hand in a pocket, he walked stiffly up to within a few feet of Sinnox, and produced a small, ugly derringer, with one blunt barrel on top of the other.

At the stunning report that followed, the vicious, stinging cloud of smoke, he seemed to wake. He felt himself propelled away from the vicinity of the bathhouse; low, excited exclamations beat upon his ears: " Absolutely justified! " " Horrible attempt to murder! " " Get his nigger and things. Best for the present." He impatiently shook himself free from his small following.

" Did I kill him? " he demanded.

There was an affirmative silence.

In his wagon, driving rapidly toward Tubal Cain, a sudden sense of horror, weakness, overtook him; the roadside rocked beneath his vision.

" Mordecai," he said to his coachman, " I — I shot a man, derringered him."

The negro was unmoved.

" Man 'at fool round you, he's bound to be killed! " he asserted. " Yes, sir; he just throwed himself right away! "

Alexander Hulings wondered how John Wooddrop's daughter would be affected. At least, he thought grimly, once more self-possessed, he had put a stop to her laughter at his expense.

VIII

IN THE weeks that followed he devoted himself energetically to the finishing of the mansion in course of erection above Tubal Cain. It was an uncompromising, square edifice of brick, with a railed belvedere on the roof, and a front lawn enclosed by a cast-iron fence. On each side of the path dividing the sod were wooden Chinese pagodas like those he had seen at the Mineral Springs; masoned rings for flower beds, and ferneries, artificially heaped stones, with a fine spray from concealed pipes. Rearing its solid bulk against the living greenery of the forest, it was, he told himself pridefully, a considerable dwelling. Within were high walls and flowery ceilings, Italian marble mantels and tall mirrors, black carved and gilded furniture, and brilliant hassocks on thick-piled carpet.

The greater part of the labor was performed by the many skilled workmen now employed in his furnaces and forges. He was utterly regardless of cost, obligations; of money itself. Alexander had always been impatient at the mere material fact of wealth, of the possession and the accumulation of sheer gold. To him it was nothing more than a lever by which he moved men and things; it was a ladder that carried him above the unnoticed and unnotable. He could always get money, at need, from men or iron; to debts he never gave a thought — when they fell due they were discharged or carried forward.

His reason for finishing his dwelling with such elaboration was obscure. Veneada had laughed at him, speaking of small Hulingses, but he harbored no concrete purpose of marriage; there was even no dominant feminine figure in his thoughts. Perhaps faintly at times he caught the odor of a goya lily; but that was probably due to the fact that lilies were already blooming in the circular conservatory of highly colored glass attached to his veranda.

The greater part of the house was darkened, shrouded in linen. He would see, when walking through the hall, mysterious and shadowy vistas, lengthened endlessly in the long mirrors, of dusky carpet and alabaster and ormolu, the faint glitter of the prisms hung on the mantel lamps. Clocks would strike sonorously in the depths of halls, with the ripple of cathedral chimes. He had a housekeeper, a stout person in oiled curls, and a number of excessively humble negro servants. Alexander Hulings got from all this an acute pleasure. It, too, was a mark of his success.

He had, below, on the public road, a small edifice of one room, which formed his office, and there he saw the vast number of men always consulting with him; he never took them above to his house. And when they dined with him it was at the hotel, newly built by the packet station on the canal — functions flooded with the prodigal amounts of champagne Hulings thought necessary to his importance.

Most of his days were spent in his road wagon, in which he traveled to Pittsburgh, West Virginia, Philadelphia, where he had properties or inter-

ests. In the cities of his associates he also avoided their homes, and met them in hotels, discussed the terms of business in bars or public parlors. With women of position he was at once indifferent and ill at ease, constantly certain that he was not appearing to good advantage, and suspecting their asides and enigmatic smiles. He was laboriously, stiffly polite, speaking in complimentary flourishes that sometimes ended in abrupt constraint. At this, afterward, he would chafe, and damn the superior airs of women.

He had returned from such an expedition to Wheeling, and was sitting in his office, when a vehicle pulled up before his door. Deliberate feet approached, and John Wooddrop entered. The latter, Alexander realized enviously, was an excessively handsome old man; he had a commanding height and a square, highly colored countenance, with close white sideburns and vigorous silver hair. His manner, too, was assured and easy. He greeted Alexander Hulings with a keen, open smile.

"Everything is splendid here!" he proclaimed. "I looked in that chafery down stream, and the metal was worked like satin. Fine weather for the furnaces — rain's ugly; a furnace is like a young girl."

Hulings wondered — contained and suspicious — what the other wanted. Wooddrop, though they passed each other frequently on the road, had not saluted him since the completion of Glory Furnace. He thought for a moment that already the older man was feeling the pinch of fuel scarcity and that he had come to beg for timber. In such a case Alexander Hulings decided coldly that he would not sell Wooddrop an ell of forest. In addition to the fact that the complete success of one or the other depended ultimately on his rival's failure, he maintained a personal dislike of John Wooddrop; he had never forgotten the humiliation forced on him long before, in the dining room of the packet, the *Hit or Miss;* he could not forgive Wooddrop's preëminence in the iron field. The latter was a legend of the manufacture of iron.

However, any idea of the other's begging privilege was immediately banished by John Wooddrop's equable bearing. He said:

"I want to speak to you, Hulings, about a rather delicate matter. In a way it is connected with my daughter, Gisela. You saw her, I believe, at the Springs."

Alexander Hulings somberly inclined his head.

"Of course," Wooddrop continued, "I heard about the difficulty you had with that Louisiana bravo. I understand you acted like a man of spirit and were completely exonerated; in fact, I had some small part in quashing legal complications. This was done not on your account, but because of Gisela, who confided to me that she held herself in blame. Mr. Hulings," he said gravely, "my feeling for my daughter is not the usual affection of parent for child. My wife is dead. Gisela —— But I won't open a personal subject with you. I spoke as I did merely, in a way, to prepare

you for what follows. My daughter felt that she did you a painful wrong; and I have come, in consequence, to offer you my good will. I propose that we end our competition and proceed together, for the good of both. Consolidated, we should inevitably control the iron situation in our state; you are younger, more vigorous than myself, and I have a certain prestige. Sir, I offer you the hand of friendly coöperation."

Alexander Hulings' gaze narrowed as he studied the man before him. At first, he had searched for an ulterior motive, need, in Wooddrop's proposal; but he quickly saw that the proposal had been completely stated. Illogically he thought of black ringleted hair and glazed muslin; he heard the echo of water dripping from a stone urn. Lost in memories, he was silent, for so long that John Wooddrop palpably grew impatient. He cleared his throat sharply; but Hulings didn't shift a muscle. Alexander was thinking now of the order he had filled the first summer at Tubal Cain, of his brutal labor and bitter, deferred aspirations. His rise, alone, had been at the price of ceaseless struggle; it was not yet consummated; but it would be — it must, and still alone. Nothing should rob him of the credit of his accomplishment; no person coupled with him might reduce or share his triumph. What he said sounded inexcusably harsh after the other's open manner.

"Only," he said, "only if the amalgamated industries bear my name — the Alexander Hulings Ironworks."

John Wooddrop's face darkened as he comprehended the implied insult to his dignity and position. He rose, so violently thrusting back the chair in which he had been sitting, that it fell with a clatter.

"You brass trumpet!" he ejaculated. "You intolerable little bag of vanity! Will you never see yourself except in a glass of flattery or intolerable self-satisfaction? It would be impossible to say which you inspire most, contempt or pity."

Strangely enough, Hulings didn't resent the language applied to him. He gazed at Wooddrop without anger. The other's noise, he thought, was but a symptom of his coming downfall. He was slowly but surely drawing the rope about the throat of Wooddrop's industries.

"Absolutely the last time," the other stuttered. "Now you can go to hell on your own high horse! Blinded by your own fatuousness — don't see where the country is running. You may impose on others, but I know your business, sir; and it's as hollow as a tin plate stove. The times will soon kick it in."

John Wooddrop stamped away from Hulings in a rage.

IX

THAT evening Alexander Hulings wondered what Gisela had told her father; he wondered more vaguely what she had thought of him — what,

if at all, she still thought. He had had a formal room illuminated for his cigar after dinner; and he sat, a small, precise figure, with dust-colored hair and a somber, intent countenance, clasping a heavy roll of expensive tobacco, in a crimson plush chair. The silence, the emptiness about him was filled with rich color, ponderous maroon draperies, marble slabs and fretted tulip-wood.

It suddenly struck him that, by himself, he was slightly ridiculous in such opulence. His house needed a mistress, a creature of elegance to preside at his table, to exhibit in her silks and jewels another sign of his importance. Again, as if from the conservatory, he caught a faint poignant perfume.

Gisela Wooddrop was a person of distinction, self-possessed and charming. There was a subtle flavor in thus considering her father's daughter — old Wooddrop's girl — and himself. He rose and walked to a mirror, critically surveying his countenance; yes, it was well marked by age, yet it was sharp in outline; his step was springy; he felt none of the lassitude of increasing years.

He was in his prime. Many young women would prefer him, his house and name, to the windy pretensions of youthful scapegoats. A diamond necklace was a convincing form of courtship. There was no absolute plan in his thoughts that night; but, in the dry romantic absorption of the days that followed, a fantastic purpose formed and increased — he determined to marry Gisela Wooddrop.

He had for this, he assured himself, some slight encouragement; it was patent that her father had entirely misread the girl's intent in suggesting an end to the hostilities which had made impossible any social intercourse. She was interested in him; the duel with Sinnox had captured her imagination. Women responded surprisingly to such things. Then she had held that it had been partly her fault! Now it seemed to him that he understood why he had built so elaborately since his return from the Mineral Springs; unconsciously — all the while — it had been for his wife, for Gisela.

There were great practical difficulties in the realization of his desire, even in his opportunity to present his question; to see Gisela Wooddrop long enough and sufficiently privately to explain all he hoped. He was, too, far past the age of romantic assignations, episodes; he could no more decorate a moonlit scene beneath a window. Alexander must not count on adventitious assistance from emotional setting: his offer could carry only its grave material solidity. Often he laughed curtly at what momentarily seemed an absurd fantasy, a madness approaching senility; then his pride would flood back, reassert the strength of his determination, the desirability of Alexander Hulings.

X

THE occasion evaded him; the simplicity of his wish, of the bald relationship between the Wooddrops and Tubal Cain, preventing it more surely than a multiplication of barriers. He never considered the possibility of a compromise with John Wooddrop, a retreat from his position. Alexander thought of Gisela as a possible addition to his dignity and standing — of the few women he had seen she possessed the greatest attractions — and he gave no thought of a sacrifice to gain her. She was to be a piece with the rest of his success.— a wife to honor his mansion, to greet a selected few of his friends, and wear the gold and jewels purchased by the Hulings iron.

He made no overt attempt to see her, but waited for opportunity. Meantime he had commenced to think of her in terms of passionless intimacy. Alexander Hulings was a solitary man; except for his industrial activity his mind was empty; and Gisela Wooddrop quickly usurped the hours after dinner, the long drives through massed and unscarred forests. He recalled her minutely — every expression that he had seen, every variation of dress. Wooddrop's daughter was handsomely provided for; but Alexander Hulings' wife would be a revelation in luxury. In New York he bought a pair of India cashmere shawls, paying a thousand dollars for them, and placed them on a chair, ready.

The weeks multiplied; and he got such pleasure from the mere thought of Gisela sweeping through his rooms, accompanying him to Philadelphia, shining beside him at the opera, that he became almost reluctant to force the issue of her choice. He was more than customarily careful with his clothes; his silk hats were immaculate; his trousers ranged in color from the most delicate sulphur to astounding London checks; he had his yellow boots polished with champagne; his handkerchiefs scented with essence of nolette and almond. For all this, his countenance was none the less severe, his aptitude for labor untouched; he followed every detail of iron manufacture, every improved process, every shift in the market.

The valley about Tubal Cain now resembled a small, widely scattered town; the dwellings of Hulings' workmen extended to the property line of the Blue Lump Furnace; roads were cut, bridges thrown across the stream. The flutter of wings, the pouring birdsong and vale of green, that Alexander had found had given place to a continuous, shattering uproar day and night; the charging of furnaces, the dull thunder of the heavy wagons of blooms, the jangle of shingling sledges and monotonous fall of trip hammers, mingled and rose in a stridulous volume to the sky, accompanied by chemical vapors, uprushing cinders and the sooty smoke of the forges. A company store had been built and stocked, and grimy troops of laborers were perpetually gathered, off shift, by its face.

Harmony itself, the station on the canal, had expanded; the new hotel,

an edifice of brick with a steep slate roof and iron grilling, faced a rival saloon and various emporia of merchandise. An additional basin had been cut in the bank for the loading of Alexander Hulings' iron on to the canal boats.

He had driven to the canal — it was early summer — to see about a congestion of movement; and, hot, he stopped in the hotel for a pint of wine in a high glass with cracked ice. The lower floor was cut in half by a hall and stairs; on the right the bar opened on the narrow porch, while at the left a ladies' entrance gave way to the inevitable dark, already musty parlor. The bar was crowded, and, intolerant of the least curtailment of his dignity or comfort, he secured his glass and moved across the hall to the stillness of the parlor.

A woman was standing, blurred in outline, at one of the narrow windows. She turned as he entered; he bowed, prepared to withdraw, when he saw that it was Gisela Wooddrop. She wore white muslin, sprigged in orange chenille, with green ribbons, and carried a green parasol. Alexander stood motionless in the doorway, his champagne in one hand and a glossy stovepipe hat in the other. He was aware of a slight inward confusion, but outwardly he was unmoved, exact. Gisela, too, maintained the turn of her flexible body, her hands on the top of the parasol. Under her bonnet her face was pale, her eyes noticeably bright. Alexander Hulings said:

" Good afternoon! "

He moved into the room. Gisela said nothing; she was like a graceful painted figure on a shadowy background. A complete ease possessed Alexander.

" Miss Wooddrop," he continued, in the vein of a simple statement. She nodded automatically. " This is a happy meeting — for me. I can now express my gratitude for your concern about a certain unfortunate occurrence at the Mineral Springs. At the same time, I regret that you were caused the slightest uneasiness."

She shuddered delicately.

" Nothing more need be said about that," she told him. " I explained to my father; but I was sorry afterward that I did it, and — and put him to fresh humiliation."

" There," he gravely replied, " little enough can be discussed. It has to do with things that you would have limited patience with, strictly an affair of business. I was referring to your susceptibility of heart, a charming female quality."

He bowed stiffly. Gisela came nearer to him, a sudden emotion trembling on her features.

" Why don't you end it? " she cried, low and distressed. " It has gone on a long while now — the bitterness between you; I am certain in his heart father is weary of it, and you are younger —— " She broke off before the tightening of his lips.

"Not a topic to be developed here," he insisted.

He had no intention, Alexander Hulings thought, of being bent about even so charming a finger. And it was well to establish at once the manner in which any future they might share should be conducted. He wanted a wife, not an intrigante nor Amazon. Her feeling, color, rapidly evaporated, and left her pallid, confused, before his calm demeanor. She turned her head away, her face lost in the bonnet, but slowly her gaze returned to meet his keen inquiry. His impulse was to ask her, then, at once, to marry him; but he restrained that headlong course, feeling that it would startle her into flight. As it was, she moved slowly toward the door.

"I am to meet a friend on the Western packet," she explained; "I thought I heard the horn."

"It was only freight," he replied. "I should be sorry to lose this short opportunity to pay you my respects; to tell you that you have been a lot in my thoughts lately. I envy the men who see you casually, whenever they choose."

She gazed at him with palpable surprise gathering in her widely opened eyes. "But," she said breathlessly, "everybody knows that you never address a polite syllable to a woman. It is more speculated on than any of your other traits."

He expanded at this indication of a widespread discussion of his qualities.

"I have had no time for merely polite speeches," he responded. "And I assure you that I am not only complimentary now; I mean that I am not saluting you with vapid elegance. I am waiting only a more fitting occasion to speak further."

She circled him slowly, with a minute whispering of crinoline, her gaze never leaving his face. Her muslin, below her white, bare throat, circled by a black velvet band, was heaving. The parasol fell with a clatter. He stooped immediately; but she was before him and snatched it up, with crimson cheeks.

"They say that you are the most hateful man alive!" she half breathed.

"Who are 'they'?" he demanded contemptuously. "Men I have beaten and women I failed to see. That hatred grows with success, with power; it is never wasted on the weak. My competitors would like to see me fall into a furnace stack — the men I have climbed over, and my debtors. They are combining every month to push me to the wall, a dozen of them together, yelping like a pack of dogs. But they haven't succeeded; they never will!" His words were like the chips from an iron bloom. "They never will," he repeated harshly, "and I have only begun. I want you to see my house sometime. I planned a great part of it with you in mind. No money was spared. . . . I should be happy to have you like it. I think of it as yours."

All the time he was speaking she was stealing by imperceptible degrees toward the door; but at his last, surprising sentence she stood transfixed

with mingled wonder and fear. She felt behind her for the open doorway and rested one hand against the woodwork. A ribald clatter sounded from the bar, and without rose the faint, clear note of an approaching packet. Her lips formed for speech, but only a slight gasp was audible; then her spreading skirts billowed through the opening, and she was gone.

Alexander Hulings found that he was still holding his silk hat; he placed it carefully on the table and took a deep drink from the iced glass. He was conscious of a greater feeling of triumph than he had ever known before. He realized that he had hardly needed to add the spoken word to the impression his being had made on Gisela Wooddrop. He had already invaded her imagination; the legend of his struggle and growth had taken possession of her. There remained now only a formal declaration, the outcome of which he felt almost certain would be in his favor.

Again in his house, he inspected the silk hangings of the particularly feminine chambers. He trod the thick carpets with a keen anticipation of her exclamations of pleasure, her surprise at convenient trifle after trifle. In the stable he surveyed a blooded mare she might take a fancy to; he must buy a light carriage, with a fringed canopy — yes, and put a driver into livery. Women liked such things.

At dinner he speculated on the feminine palate; he liked lean mountain venison, and a sherry that left almost a sensation of dust on the tongue; but women preferred sparkling hock and pastry, fruit preserved in white brandy, and pagodas of barley sugar.

Through the open windows came the subdued clatter of his forges; the hooded candles on the table flickered slightly in a warm eddy, while corresponding shadows stirred on the heavy napery, the Sheffield, and delicate creamy Belleek of his dinner service — the emblem of his certitude and pride.

XI

In October Alexander Hulings took Gisela Wooddrop to the home that had been so largely planned for her enjoyment. They had been married in a private parlor of the United States Hotel, in Philadelphia; and after a small supper had gone to the Opera House to see "Love in a Village," followed by a musical *pasticcio*. Gisela's mother had died the winter before, and she was attended by an elderly distant cousin; no one else was present at the wedding ceremony except a friend of Gisela's — a girl who wept copiously — and Doctor Veneada. The latter's skin hung in loose folds, like a sack partially emptied of its contents; his customary spirit had evaporated too; and he sat through the wedding supper neither eating nor speaking, save for the forced proposal of the bride's health.

Gisela Wooddrop and Alexander Hulings, meeting on a number of carefully planned, apparently accidental occasions, had decided to be married while John Wooddrop was confined to his room by severe gout. In this man-

ner they avoided the unpleasant certainty of his refusal to attend his daughter's, and only child's, wedding. Gisela had not told Alexander Hulings what the aging Ironmaster had said when necessarily informed of her purpose. No message had come to Alexander from John Wooddrop; since the ceremony the Hulingses had had no sign of the other's existence.

Alexander surveyed his wife with huge satisfaction as they sat for the first time at supper in their house. She wore white, with the diamonds he had given her about her firm young throat, black-enamel bracelets on her wrists, and her hair in a gilt net. She sighed with deep pleasure.

"It's wonderful!" she proclaimed, and then corroborated all he had surmised about the growth of her interest in him; it had reached forward and back from the killing of Partridge Sinnox. "That was the first time," she told him, "that I realized you were so — so big. You looked so miserable on the canal boat, coming out here those years ago, that it hardly seemed possible for you merely to live; and when you started the hearths at Tubal Cain everyone who knew anything about iron just laughed at you — we used to go down sometimes and look at those killing workmen you had, and that single mule and old horse.

"I wasn't interested then, and I don't know when it happened; but now I can see that a time soon came when men stopped laughing at you. I can just remember when father first became seriously annoyed, when he declared that he was going to force you out of the valleys at once. But it seemed you didn't go. And then in a few months he came home in a dreadful temper, when he found that you controlled all the timber on the mountains. He said of course you would break before he was really short of charcoal. But it seems you haven't broken. And now I'm married to you; I'm Gisela Hulings!"

"This is hardly more than the beginning," he added; "the foundation — just as iron is the base for so much. I — we — are going on," he corrected the period lamely, but was rewarded by a charming smile. "Power!" he said, shutting up one hand, his straight, fine features as hard as the cameo in his neckcloth.

She instantly fired at his tensity of will.

"How splendid you are, Alexander!" she cried. "How tremendously satisfactory for a woman to share! You can have no idea what it means to be with a man like a stone wall!

"I wish," she said, "that you would always tell me about your work. I'd like more than anything else to see you going on, step by step up. I suppose it is extraordinary in a woman. I felt that way about father's iron, and he only laughed at me; and yet once I kept a forge daybook almost a week, when a clerk was ill. I think I could be of real assistance to you, Alexander."

He regarded with the profoundest distaste any mingling of his, Alexander Hulings', wife and a commercial industry. He had married in order to

give his life a final touch of elegance and proper symmetry. No, no; he wanted Gisela to receive him at the door of his mansion, in fleckless white, as she was now, and jewels, at the end of his day in the clamor and soot of business and put it temporarily from his thoughts.

He was distinctly annoyed that her father had permitted her to post the forge book; it was an exceedingly unladylike proceeding. He told her something of this in carefully chosen, deliberate words; and she listened quietly, but with a faint air of disappointment.

"I want you to buy yourself whatever you fancy," he continued; "nothing is too good for you — for my wife. I am very proud of you and insist on your making the best appearance, wherever we are. Next year, if the political weather clears at all, we'll go to Paris, and you can explore the mantua-makers there. You got the shawls in your dressing room?"

She hesitated, cutting uncertainly with a heavy silver knife at a crystallized citron.

Then, with an expression of determination, she addressed him again:

"But don't you see that it is your power, your success over men, that fascinates me; that first made me think of you? In a way this is not — not an ordinary affair of ours; I had other chances more commonplace, which my father encouraged, but they seemed so stupid that I couldn't entertain them. I love pretty clothes, Alexander; I adore the things you've given me; but will you mind my saying that that isn't what I married you for? I am sure you don't care for such details, for money itself, in the least. You are too strong. And that is why I did marry you, why I love to think about you, and what I want to follow, to admire and understand."

He was conscious of only a slight irritation at this masculine-sounding speech; he must have no hesitation in uprooting such ideas from his wife's thoughts; they detracted from her feminine charm, struck at the bottom of her duties, her privileges and place.

"At the next furnace in blast," he told her with admirable control, "the workmen will insist on your throwing in, as my bride, a slipper; and in that way you can help the charge."

Then, by planning an immediate trip with her to West Virginia, he abruptly brought the discussion to a close.

Alexander was pleased, during the weeks which followed, at the fact that she made no further reference to iron. She went about the house, gravely busy with its maintenance, as direct and efficient as he was in the larger realm. Almost her first act was to discharge the housekeeper. The woman came to Alexander, her fat face smeared with crying, and protested bitterly against the loss of a place she had filled since the house was roofed.

He was, of course, curt with her, and ratified Gisela's decision; but privately he was annoyed. He had not even intended his wife to discharge the practical duties of living — thinking of her as a suave figure languidly

moving from parlor to dining room or boudoir; however, meeting her in a hall, energetically directing the dusting of a cornice, in a rare flash of perception he said nothing.

XII

He would not admit, even to himself, that his material affairs were less satisfactory than they had been the year before, but such he vaguely knew was a fact. Speculation in Western government lands, large investments in transportation systems for the present fallow, had brought about a general condition of commercial unrest. Alexander Hulings felt this, not only by the delayed payment for shipments of metal, but in the allied interests he had accumulated. Merchandise was often preceded by demands for payment; the business of a nail manufactory he owned in Wheeling had been cut in half.

He could detect concern in the shrewd countenance and tones of Samuel Cryble, a hard-headed Yankee from a Scotch Protestant valley in New Hampshire, who had risen to the position of his chief assistant and, in a small way, copartner. They sat together in the dingy office on the public road and silently, grimly, went over invoices and payments, debts and debtors. It was on such an occasion that Alexander had word of the death of Doctor Veneada.

Hulings' involuntary concern, the stirred memories of the dead man's liberal spirit and mind — he had been the only person Alexander Hulings could call friend — speedily gave place to a growing anxiety as to how Veneada might have left his affairs. He had been largely a careless man in practical matters.

Alexander had never satisfied the mortgage he had granted Veneada on the timber properties purchased with the other man's money. He had tried to settle the indebtedness when it had first fallen due, but the doctor had begged him to let the money remain as it was.

"I'll only throw it away on some confounded soft-witted scheme, Alex," he had insisted. "With you, I know where it is; it's a good investment."

Now Hulings recalled that the second extension had expired only a few weeks before Veneada's death, incurring an obligation the settlement of which he had been impatiently deferring until he saw the other.

He had had a feeling that Veneada, with no near or highly regarded relatives, would will him the timber about the valleys; yet he was anxious to have the thing settled. The Alexander Hulings Company was short of available funds. He returned to Eastlake for Veneada's funeral; and there, for the first time, he saw the cousins to whom the doctor had occasionally and lightly alluded. They were, he decided, a lean and rapacious crew.

He remained in Eastlake for another twenty-four hours, but was forced to leave with nothing discovered; and it was not until a week later that, again in his office, he learned that Veneada had made no will. This, it

seemed, had been shown beyond any doubt. He rose, walked to a dusty window, and gazed out unseeingly at an eddy of dead leaves and dry metallic snow in a bleak November wind.

After a vague, disconcerted moment he shrewdly divined exactly what would occur. He said nothing to Cryble, seated with his back toward him; and even Gisela looked with silent inquiry at his absorption throughout supper. She never questioned him now about any abstraction that might be concerned with affairs outside their pleasant life together.

The inevitable letter at last arrived, announcing the fact that, in a partition settlement of Veneada's estate by his heirs, it was necessary to settle the expired mortgage. It could not have come, he realized, at a more inconvenient time.

He was forced to discuss the position with Cryble; and the latter heard him to the end with a narrowed, searching vision.

" That money out of the business now might leave us on the bank," he asserted. " As I see it, there's but one thing to do — go over all the timber, judge what we actually will need for coaling, buy that — or, if we must, put another mortgage on it — and let the rest, a good two-thirds, go."

This, Alexander acknowledged to himself, was the logical if not the only course. And then John Wooddrop would purchase the remainder; he would have enough charcoal to keep up his local industries beyond his own life and another. All his — Alexander's — planning, aspirations, sacrifice, would have been for nothing. He would never, like John Wooddrop, be a great industrial despot, or command, as he had so often pictured, the iron situation of the state. To do that, he would have to control all the iron the fumes of whose manufacture stained the sky for miles about Harmony. If Wooddrop recovered an adequate fuel supply Alexander Hulings would never occupy a position of more than secondary importance.

There was a bare possibility of his retaining all the tracts again by a second mortgage; but as he examined that, it sank from a potentiality to a thing without substance. It would invite an investigation, a public gleaning of facts, that he must now avoid. His pride could not contemplate the publication of the undeniable truth — that what he had so laboriously built up stood on an insecure foundation.

" It is necessary," he said stiffly, " in order to realize on my calculations, that I continue to hold all the timber at present in my name."

" And that's where you make a misjudgment," Cryble declared, with an equal bluntness. " I can see clear enough that you are letting your personal feeling affect your business sense. There is room enough in Pennsylvania for both you and old Wooddrop. Anyhow, there's got to be somebody second in the parade, and that is a whole lot better than tail end."

Alexander Hulings nodded absently; Cryble's philosophy was correct for a clerk, an assistant, but Alexander Hulings felt the tyranny of a wider necessity. He wondered where he could get the money to satisfy the claim

of the doctor's heirs. His manufacturing interests in West Virginia, depreciated as they were at present, would about cover the debt. Ordinarily they were worth a third more; and in ten years they would double in value. He relentlessly crushed all regret at parting with what was now his best property and promptly made arrangements to secure permanently the timberland.

Soon, he felt, John Wooddrop must feel the pinch of fuel shortage; and Alexander awaited such development with keen attention. As he had anticipated, when driving from the canal, he saw that the Blue Lump Furnace had gone out of blast, its workmen dispersed. Gisela, the day before, had been to see her father; and he was curious to hear what she might report. A feeling of coming triumph, of inevitable worldly expansion, settled comfortably over him, and he regarded his wife pleasantly through a curtain of cigar smoke.

They were seated in a parlor, already shadowy with an early February dusk; coals were burning brightly in a polished open stove, by which Gisela was embroidering in brightly colored wool on a frame. She had the intent, placid expression of a woman absorbed in a small, familiar duty. As he watched her Alexander Hulings' satisfaction deepened — young and fine and vigorous, she was preëminently a wife for his importance and position. She gazed at him vacantly, her eyes crinkled at the corners, her lips soundlessly counting stitches, and a faint smile rose to his lips.

He was anxious to hear what she might say about John Wooddrop, and yet a feeling of propriety restrained him from a direct question. He had not had a line, a word or message, from Wooddrop since he had married the other's daughter. The aging man, he knew, idolized Gisela; and her desertion — for so John Wooddrop would hold it — must have torn the ironmaster. She had, however, been justified in her choice, he contentedly continued his train of thought. Gisela had everything a woman could wish for. He had been a thoughtful husband. Her clothes, of the most beautiful texture and design, were pinned with jewels; her deftly moving fingers flashed with rings; the symbol of his success, his ——

"My father looks badly, Alexander," she said suddenly. "I wish you would see him, and that he would talk to you. But you won't and he won't. He is very nearly as stubborn as yourself. I wish you could make a move; after all, you are younger. . . . But then, you would make each other furious in a second." She sighed deeply.

"Has he shown any desire to see me?"

"No," she admitted. "You must know he thinks you married me only to get his furnaces; he is ridiculous about it — just as if you needed any more! He has been fuming and planning a hundred things since his charcoal has been getting low."

She stopped and scrutinized her embroidery, a naïve pattern of rose and

urn and motto. He drew a long breath; that was the first tangible indication he had had of the working out of his planning, the justification of his sacrifice.

" I admire father," she went on once more, conversationally; " my love for you hasn't blinded me to his qualities. He has a surprising courage and vigor for an —— Why, he must be nearly seventy! And now he has the most extraordinary plan for what he calls ' getting the better of you.' He was as nice with me as possible, but I could see that he thinks you're lost this time. . . . No, the darker green. Alexander, don't you think the words would be sweet in magenta? "

" Well," he demanded harshly, leaning forward, " what is this plan? "

She looked up, surprised at his hard impatience.

" How queer you are! And that's your iron expression, you know it's expressly forbidden in the house, after hours. His plan? I'm certain there's no disloyalty in telling you. Isn't it mad, at his age? And it will cost him an outrageous amount of money. He is going to change the entire system of all his forges and furnaces. It seems stone coal has been found on his slopes; and he is going to blow in with that, and use a hot blast in his smelting."

Alexander Hulings sat rigid, motionless; the cigar in his hand cast up an unbroken blue ribbon of smoke. Twice he started to speak, to exclaim incredulously; but he uttered no sound. It seemed that all his planning had been utterly overthrown, ruined; in a manner which he — anyone — could not have foreseen. The blowing in of furnaces with hard coal had developed since his entrance into the iron field. It had not been generally declared successful; the pig produced had been so impure that, with working in an ordinary or even puddling forge, it had often to be subjected to a third, finery fire. But he had been conscious of a slow improvement in the newer working; he had vaguely acknowledged that sometime anthracite would displace charcoal for manufacturing purposes; in future years he might adopt it himself.

But John Wooddrop had done it before him; all the square miles of timber that he had acquired with such difficulty, that he had retained at the sacrifice of his best property, would be worthless. The greater part of it could not be teamed across Wooddrop's private roads or hauled advantageously over a hundred intervening streams and miles. It was all wasted, lapsed — his money and dreams!

" It will take over a year," she went on. " I don't understand it at all; but it seems that sending a hot blast into a furnace, instead of the cold, keeps the metal at a more even temperature. Father's so interested you'd think he was just starting out in life — though, really, he is an old man." She laughed. " Competition has been good for him."

All thrown away; in vain! Alexander Hulings wondered what acidulous comment Cryble would make. There were no coal deposits on his land, its

nature forbade that; besides, he had no money to change the principal of his drafts. He gazed about at the luxury that surrounded Gisela and himself; there was no lien on the house, but there still remained some thousands of dollars to pay on the carpets and fixtures. His credit, at least, was unimpeachable; decorators, tradespeople of all sorts, had been glad to have him in their debt. But if any whisper of financial stringency escaped, a horde would be howling about his gate, demanding the settlement of their picayune accounts.

The twilight had deepened; the fire made a ruddy area in the gloom, into the heart of which he flung his cigar. His wife embroidered serenely. As he watched her, noting her firm, well-modeled features, realizing her utter unconsciousness of all that he essentially at that moment was, he felt a strange sensation of loneliness, of isolation.

Alexander Hulings had a sudden impulse to take her into his confidence; to explain everything to her — the disaster that had overtaken his project of ultimate power, the loss of the West Virginia interest, the tightness of money. He had a feeling that she would not be a negligible adviser — he had been a witness of her efficient management of his house — and he felt a craving for the sympathy she would instantly extend.

Alexander parted his lips to inform her of all that had occurred; but the habit of years, the innate fiber of his being, prevented. A wife, he reminded himself, a woman, had no part in the bitter struggle for existence; it was not becoming for her to mingle with the affairs of men. She should be purely a creature of elegance, of solace, and, dressed in India muslin or vaporous silk, ornament a divan, sing French or Italian songs at a piano. The other was manifestly improper.

This, illogically, made him irritable with Gisela; she appeared, contentedly sewing, a peculiarly useless appendage in his present stress of mind. He was glum again at supper, and afterward retired into an office he had had arranged on the ground floor of the mansion. There he got out a number of papers, accounts and pass books; but he spent little actual time on them. He sat back in his chair, with his head sunk low, and mind thronged with memories of the past, of his long, uphill struggle against oblivion and ill health.

Veneada was gone; yes, and Conrad Wishon too — the supporters and confidants of his beginning. He himself was fifty years old. At that age a man should be firmly established, successful, and not deviled by a thousand unexpected mishaps. By fifty a man's mind should be reasonably at rest, his accomplishment and future secure; yet there was nothing of security, but only combat, before him.

Wooddrop had been a rich man from the start, when he, Alexander Hulings, at the humiliating failure of the law, had had to face life with a few paltry hundreds. No wonder he had been obliged to contract debts, to enter into impossibly onerous agreements! Nothing but struggle ahead, a re-

lentless continuation of the past years; and he had reached, passed, his prime!

There, for a day, he had thought himself safe, moving smoothly toward the highest pinnacles; when, without warning, at a few words casually pronounced over an embroidery frame, the entire fabric of his existence had been rent! It was not alone the fact of John Wooddrop's progressive spirit that he faced, but now a rapidly accumulating mass of difficulties. He was dully amazed at the treacherous shifting of life, at the unheralded change of apparently solid ground for quicksand.

XIII

THOUGH the industries centered in Tubal Cain were operated and apparently owned by the Alexander Hulings Iron Company, and Hulings was publicly regarded as their proprietor, in reality his hold on them was hardly more than nominal. At the erection of the furnaces and supplementary forges he had been obliged to grant such rebates to the Columbus Transportation interest in return for capital, he had contracted to supply them at a minimum price such a large proportion of his possible output, that, with continuous shifts, he was barely able to dispose advantageously of a sixth of the year's manufacture.

He had made such agreements confident that he should ultimately control the Wooddrop furnaces; when, doubling his resources, he would soon free himself from conditions imposed on him by an early lack of funds. Now it was at least problematic whether he would ever extend his power to include the older man's domain. His marriage with Gisela had only further separated them, hardening John Wooddrop's resolve that Hulings should never fire a hearth of his, a determination strengthened by the rebuilding of Wooddrop's furnaces for a stone-coal heat.

The widespread land speculation, together with the variability of currency, now began seriously to depress the country, and, more especially, Alexander Hulings. He went to Philadelphia, to Washington, for conferences; but returned to his mansion and Gisela in an increasing somberness of mood. All the expedients suggested, the legalizing of foreign gold and silver, the gradual elimination of the smaller state-bank notes, an extra coinage, one after another failed in their purpose of stabilization; an acute panic was threatened.

Alexander was almost as spare of political comments to his wife as he was of business discussion. That, too, he thought, did not become the female poise. At times, bitter and brief, he condemned the Administration; during dinner he all but startled a servant into dropping a platter by the unexpected violence of a period hurled at the successful attempts to destroy the national bank. And when, as — he declared — a result of that, the state institutions refused specie payment, and a flood of rapidly depreciating

paper struck at the base of commerce, Alexander gloomily informed Gisela that the country was being sold for a barrel of hard cider.

He had, with difficulty, a while before secured what had appeared to be an advantageous order from Virginia; and, after extraordinary effort, he had delivered the iron. But during the lapsing weeks, when the state banks refused to circulate gold, the rate of exchange for paper money fell so far that he lost all his calculated profit, and a quarter of the labor as well. The money of other states depreciated in Pennsylvania a third. In addition to these things Alexander commenced to have trouble with his workmen — wages, too, had diminished, but their hours increased. Hulings, like other commercial operators, issued printed money of his own, good at the company store, useful in the immediate vicinity of Tubal Cain, but valueless at any distance. Cryble, as he had anticipated, recounted the triumph of John Wooddrop.

"The old man can't be beat!" he asserted. "We've got a nice little business here. Tailed on to Wooddrop's, we should do good; but you are running it into an iron wall. You ain't content with enough."

Cryble was apparently unconscious of the dangerous glitter that had come into Hulings' gaze. Alexander listened quietly until the other had finished, and then curtly released him from all connection, any obligation to himself. James Cryble was undisturbed.

"I was thinking myself about a move," he declared. "This concern is pointed bull-headed on to destruction! You're a sort of peacock," he further told Hulings; "you can't do much besides spread and admire your own feathers. But you'll get learned."

Alexander made no reply, and the other shortly after disappeared from his horizon. Cryble, he thought contemptuously, a man of routine, had no more salience than one of the thousands of identical iron pigs run from Glory Furnace. There commenced now a period of toil more bitter, more relentless, than his first experience in the valleys; by constant effort he was able to keep just ahead of the unprofitable labor for the Columbus Railroad. The number of workmen grew constantly smaller, vaguely contaminated by the unsettled period, while his necessity increased. Again and again he longed to strip off his coat and superfluous linen and join the men working the metal in the hearths; he would have felt better if he could have had actual part in rolling and stamping the pig beds, or even in dumping materials into the furnace stack.

In the fever of Alexander Hulings' impatience and concern, the manufacture of his iron seemed to require months between the crude ore and the finished bars and blooms. He detected a growing impotence among laborers, and told them of it with an unsparing, lashing tongue. A general hatred of him again flashed into being; but it was still accompanied by a respect amounting to fear.

He was approached, at a climax of misfortune, by representatives of the

railroad. They sat, their solid faces rimmed in whiskers, and smooth fingers playing with portentous seals, in his office, while one of their number expounded their presence.

"It's only reasonable, Hulings," he stated suavely, "that one man can't stand up against present conditions. Big concerns all along the coast have gone to wreck. You are an exceptional man, one we would be glad to have in our Company; and that, briefly, is what we have come to persuade you to do — to merge your activities here into the railroad; to get on the locomotive with us.

"Long ago you were shrewd enough to see that steam transportation was the coming power; and now — though for the moment we seem overextended — your judgment has been approved. It only remains for you to ratify your perspicacity and definitely join us. We can, I think, offer you something in full keeping with your ability — a vice presidency of the re-organized company and a substantial personal interest."

Alexander attended the speaker half absently, though he realized that probably he had arrived at the crisis of his life, his career; his attention was rapt away by dreams, memories. He saw himself again, saturated with sweat and grime, sitting with Conrad Wishon against the little house where they slept, and planning his empire of iron; he thought again, even further back, of the slough of anguish from which he had won free, and persistently, woven through the entire texture, was his vision of iron and of pride. He had sworn to himself that he would build success from the metal for which he had such a personal affinity; that he would be known as the great Ironmaster of Pennsylvania; and that unsubstantial ideal, tottering now on the edge of calamity, was still more potent, more persuasive, than the concrete and definite promises of safety, prosperity, the implied threat, of the established power before him.

He had an objective comprehension of the peril of his position, his negligible funds and decreasing credit, the men with accounts clamoring for settlement, he thought absurdly of a tessellated floor he had lately laid in his vestibule; the mingled aggression and uncertainty on every hand; but his subjective self rose up and dominated him. Louder than any warning was the cry, the necessity, for the vindication of the triumphant Alexander Hulings, perpetually rising higher. To surrender his iron now, to enter, a mere individual, however elevated, into a corporation, was to confess himself defeated, to tear down all the radiant images from which he had derived his reason for being.

Hulings thought momentarily of Gisela; he had, it might be, no right to involve her blindly in a downfall of the extent that now confronted him. However, he relentlessly repressed this consideration, together with a vague idea of discussing with her their — his — position. His was the judgment, the responsibility, that sustained them; she was only an ornament, the

singer of little airs in the evening; the decoration, in embroidery and gilt flowers, of his table.

He thanked the speaker adequately and firmly voiced his refusal of the offer.

"I am an iron man," he stated in partial explanation; "as that I must sink or swim."

"Iron," another commented dryly, "is not noted for its floating properties."

"I am disappointed, Hulings," the first speaker acknowledged; "yes, and surprised. Of course we are not ignorant of the condition here; and you must also know that the company would like to control your furnaces. We have offered you the palm, and you must be willing to meet the consequences of your refusal. As I said, we'd like to have you too — energetic and capable; for, as the Bible reads, 'He that is not for me ——' "

When they had gone, driving in a local surrey back to the canal, Alexander Hulings secured his hat and, dismissing his carriage, walked slowly down to Tubal Cain Forge. An increasing roar and uprush of sooty smoke and sparks marked the activity within; the water poured dripping under the water wheel, through the channel he had cleared, those long years back, with bleeding hands; strange men stood at the shed opening; but the stream and its banks were exactly as he had first seen them.

His life seemed to have swung in a circle from that former day to now — from dilemma to dilemma. What, after all, did he have, except an increasing weariness of years, that he had lacked then? He thought, with a grim smile, that he might find in his safe nine hundred dollars. All his other possessions suddenly took on an unsubstantial aspect; they were his; they existed; yet they eluded his realization, brought him none of the satisfaction of an object, a fact, solidly grasped.

His name, as he had planned, had grown considerable in men's ears, its murmur rose like an incense to his pride; yet, underneath, it gave him no satisfaction. It gave him no satisfaction because it carried no conviction of security, no personal corroboration of the mere sound.

What, he now saw, he had struggled to establish was a good opinion in his own eyes, that actually he was a strong man; the outer response, upon which he had been intent, was unimportant compared with the other. And in the latter he had not moved forward a step; if he had widened his sphere he had tacitly accepted heavier responsibilities — undischarged. A flicker hammered on a resonant limb, just as it had long ago. How vast, eternal, life was! Conrad Wishon, with his great arched chest and knotted arms, had gone into obliterating earth.

Death was preferable to ruin, to the concerted gibes of little men, the forgetfulness of big; once, looking at his greying countenance in a mirror, he had realized that it would be easier for him to die than fail. Then, with a sudden twisting of his thoughts, his mind rested on Gisela, his wife. He

told himself, with justifiable pride, that she had been content with him; Gisela was not an ordinary woman, she had not married him for a cheap and material reason, and whatever admiration she had had in the beginning he had been able to preserve. Alexander Hulings was certain of that; he saw it in a hundred little acts of her daily living. She thought he was a big man, a successful man; he had not permitted a whisper of his difficulties to fret her serenity, and, by heaven, he thought with a sharp return of his native vigor, she never should hear of them; he would stifle them quietly, alone, one by one.

The idea of death, self-inflicted, a flaccid surrender, receded before the flood of his returning pride, confidence. Age, he felt, had not impaired him; if his importance was now but a shell, he would fill it with the iron of actuality; he would place himself and Gisela for ever beyond the threats of accident and circumstance.

XIV

GISELA had been to Philadelphia, and she was unusually gay, communicative; she was dressed in lavender-and-rose net, with black velvet, and about her throat she wore a sparkling pendant that he had never before noticed.

"I hope you'll like it," she said, fingering the diamonds; "the shape was so graceful that I couldn't resist. And you are so generous, Alexander!"

He was always glad, he told her briefly, to see her in new and fine adornments. He repressed an involuntary grimace at the thought of the probable cost of the ornament. She could hardly have chosen a worse time in which to buy jewels. Not only his own situation, but the whole time, was one for retrenchment. The impulse to tell her this was speedily lost in his pride of her really splendid appearance. He himself had commanded her to purchase whatever she fancied; he had explained that that — the domain of beauty — was exclusively hers; and it was impossible to complain at her first considerable essay.

Here his feeling was rooted in the deepest part of his being — he was, after all, twenty-five years older than Gisela; and, as if in a species of reparation for the discrepancy, he owed her all the luxury possible. This he had promised her — and himself; and an inability to provide gowns and necklaces and gewgaws was a most humiliating confession of failure, a failure unendurable to him on every plane. Alexander, too, had told her finally that she had no place in his affairs of business; and after that he could not very well burden her with the details of a stupid — and momentary — need for economy.

"I got a sweet bouquet holder," she continued; "in chased gold, with garnets. And a new prayer book; you must see that — bound in carved ivory, from Paris." He listened with a stolid face to her recital, vaguely

wondering how much she had spent; how long the jeweler would wait for settlement. " And there was a wonderful Swiss watch I thought of for you; it rang the hours and —— "

" That," he said hastily, " I don't need. I have two excellent watches."

" But you are always complaining! " she returned, mildly surprised. " I didn't get it, but told the man to put it aside. I'll write if you don't want it."

" Do! "

Suddenly he felt weary, a twinge of sciatica shot through his hip; he must keep out of the damp cast houses, with their expanses of wet sand. But actually he was as good as he had ever been; better, for he now saw clearly what he must accomplish, satisfy. The present national crisis would lift; there was already a talk of the resumption of gold payment by the state banks; and the collapse of a firm associated with him in a rolling mill had thrown its control into his hands. Steam power had already been connected, and he could supply the railroad corporation with a certain number of finished rails direct, adding slightly to his profit.

The smallest gain was important, a scrap of wood to keep him temporarily afloat on disturbed waters; he saw before him, close by, solid land. But meantime more than one metaphorical wave swept over his head, leaving him shaken. The Columbus people returned a shipment of iron, with the complaint that it was below the grade useful for their purpose. He inspected the rejected bars with his head forgeman, and they were unable to discover the deficiency.

" That's good puddled iron," the forgeman asserted. " I saw the pig myself, and it could have been wrought on a cold anvil. Do they expect blister steel? "

Alexander Hulings kept to himself the knowledge that this was the beginning of an assault upon his integrity, his name and possessions. At court he could have established the quality of his iron, forced the railroad to accept it within their contract. But he had no money to expend on tedious legal processes; and they knew that in the city.

" We can get a better price for it than theirs," he commented.

The difficulty lay in supplying a stated amount. The forgeman profanely explained something of his troubles with labor:

" I get my own anvils busy, and perhaps the furnaces running out the metal, when the damn charcoal burners lay down. That's the hardest crowd of niggers and drunken Dutch that ever cut wood! It's never a week but one is shot or has his throat cut; and some of the coal they send down looks like pine ash."

At their home he found Gisela with the draperies of the dining room in a silken pile on the carpet.

" I'm tired of this room," she announced; " it's too — too heavy. Those plum-colored curtains almost made me weep. Now what do you think? A white marble mantel in place of that black, and a mirror with wreaths of

colored gilt. An apple green carpet, with pink satin at the windows, draped with India muslin, and gold cords, and Spanish mahogany furniture — that's so much lighter than this." She studied the interior seriously. "Less ormolu and more crystal," Gisela decided.

He said nothing; he had given her the house — it was her world, to do with as she pleased. The decorating of the dining room had cost over three thousand dollars. "And a big Chinese cage, full of finches and rollers." He got a certain grim entertainment from the accumulating details of her planning. Certainly it would be impossible to find anywhere a wife more unconscious of the sordid details of commerce. Gisela was his ideal of elegance and propriety.

Nevertheless, he felt an odd, illogical loneliness fastening on him here, where he had thought to be most completely at ease. His mind, filled with the practical difficulties of tomorrow, rebelled against the restriction placed on it; he wanted to unburden himself of his troubles, to lighten them with discussion, give them the support of another's belief in his ability, his destiny; but, with Cryble gone, and his wife dedicated to purely æsthetic considerations, there was no one to whom he dared confess his growing predicament.

Marriage, he even thought, was something of a failure — burdensome. Gisela, in the exclusive rôle of a finch in an elaborate cage, annoyed him now by her continual chirping song. He thought disparagingly of all women; light creatures fashioned of silks and perfume; extravagant. After supper he went directly into his office room.

There, conversely, he was irritated with the accounts spread perpetually before him, the announcements of fresh failures, depreciated money and bonds. He tramped back and forth across the limited space, longing to share Gisela's tranquillity. In a manner he had been unjust to her; he had seen, noted, other women — his own was vastly superior. Particularly she was truthful, there was no subterfuge, pretense, about her; and she had courage, but, John Wooddrop's daughter, she would have. Alexander Hulings thought of the old man with reluctant admiration; he was strong; though he, Hulings, was stronger. He would, he calculated brutally, last longer; and in the end he would, must, win.

XV

YET adverse circumstances closed about him like the stone walls of a cell. The slightest error or miscalculation would bring ruin crashing about his pretensions. It was now principally his commanding interest in the rolling mill that kept him going; his forges and furnaces, short of workmen, were steadily losing ground. And, though summer was at an end, Gisela chose this time to divert the labor of a considerable shift to the setting of new masoned flower beds. He watched the operation somberly

from the entrance of the conservatory attached, like a parti-colored fantastic glass bubble, to his house.

"It won't take them over four or five days," Gisela said at his shoulder.

He positively struggled to condemn her foolish waste, but not a word escaped the barrier of his pride. Once started, he would have to explain the entire precarious situation to her — the labor shortage, the dangerous tension of his credit, the inimical powers anxious to absorb his industry, the fact that he was a potential failure. He wished, at any sacrifice, to keep the last from his wife, convinced as she was of his success.

Surely in a few months the sky would clear and he would triumph — this time solidly, beyond all assault. He rehearsed this without his usual conviction; the letters from the Columbus System were growing more dictatorial; he had received a covertly insolent communication from an insignificant tool works.

The Columbus Railroad had written that they were now able to secure a rail, satisfactory for their purpose and tests, at a considerably lower figure than he demanded. This puzzled him; knowing intimately the whole iron situation, he realized that it was impossible for any firm to make a legitimate profit at a smaller price than his. When he learned that the new contracts were being met by John Wooddrop his face was ugly — the older man, at a sacrifice, was deliberately, coldly hastening his downfall. But he abandoned this unpleasant thought when, later, in a circuitous manner, he learned that the Wooddrop Rolling Mills, situated ten miles south of the valleys, were running on a new, secret, and vastly economical system.

He looked up, his brow scored, from his desk. Conrad Wishon's son, a huge bulk, was looking out through a window, completely blocking off the light. Alexander Hulings said:

"I'd give a thousand dollars to know something of that process!"

The second Wishon turned on his heel.

"What's that?" he demanded.

Alexander told him. The other was thoughtful.

"I wouldn't have a chance hereabouts," he pronounced; "but I'm not so well known at the South Mills. Perhaps ——"

Hulings repeated moodily:

"A thousand dollars!"

He was skeptical of Wishon's ability to learn anything of the new milling. It had to do obscurely with the return of the bars through the rollers without having to be constantly re-fed. Such a scheme would cut forty men from the pay books.

A black depression settled over him, as tangible as soot; he felt physically weary, sick. Alexander fingered an accumulation of bills; one, he saw, was from the Philadelphia jeweler — a fresh extravagance of Gisela's.

But glancing hastily at its items, he was puzzled — " Resetting diamond necklace in pendant, fifty-five dollars." It was addressed to Gisela; its presence here, on his desk, was an error. After a momentary, fretful conjecturing he dismissed it from his thoughts; women were beyond comprehension.

He had now, from the sciatica, a permanent limp; a cane had ceased to be merely ornamental. A hundred small details, falling wrongly, rubbed on the raw of his dejection. The feeling of loneliness deepened about him. As the sun sank, throwing up over the world a last dripping bath of red-gold light, he returned slowly to his house. Each window, facing him, flashed in a broad sheet of blinding radiance, a callous illumination. A peacock, another of Gisela's late extravagances, spread a burnished metallic plumage, with a grating cry.

But the hall was pleasantly still, dim. He stood for a long minute, resting, drawing deep breaths of quietude. Every light was lit in the reception room, where he found his wife, seated, in burnt-orange satin and bare powdered shoulders, amid a glitter of glass prisms, gilt and marble. Her very brilliance, her gay, careless smile, added to his fatigue. Suddenly he thought — I am an old man with a young wife! His dejection changed to bitterness. Gisela said:

" I hope you like my dress; it came from Vienna, and was wickedly expensive. Really I ought to wear sapphires with it; I rather think I'll get them. Diamonds look like glass with orange."

Her words were lost in a confused blurring of his mind. He swayed slightly. Suddenly the whole circumstance of his living, of Gisela's babbling, became unendurable. His pride, his conception of a wife set in luxury above the facts of existence, a mere symbol of his importance and wealth, crumbled, stripping him of all pretense. He raised a thin, darkly veined and trembling hand.

" Sapphires! " he cried shrilly. " Why, next week we'll be lucky if we can buy bread! I am practically smashed — smashed at fifty and more. This house that you fix up and fix up, that dress and the diamonds and clocks, and — and —— They are not real; in no time they'll go, fade away like smoke, leave me, us, bare. For five years I have been fighting for my life; and now I'm losing; everything is slipping out of my hands. While you talk of sapphires; you build bedamned gardens with the men I need to keep us alive; and peacocks and —— "

He stopped as abruptly as he had commenced, flooded with shame at the fact that he stood before her self-condemned; that she, Gisela, saw in him a sham. He miserably avoided her gaze, and was surprised when she spoke, in an unperturbed warm voice:

" Sit down, Alexander; you are tired and excited." She rose and, with a steady hand, forced him into a chair. " I am glad that, at last, you told me

this," she continued evenly; "for now we can face it, arrange, together. It can't be so bad as you suppose. Naturally you are worn, but you are a very strong man; I have great faith in you."

He gazed at her in growing wonderment; here was an entirely different woman from the Gisela who had chattered about Viennese gowns. He noted, with a renewed sense of security, the firmness of her lips, her level, unfaltering gaze. He had had an unformulated conviction that in crises women wrung their hands, fainted. She gesticulated toward the elaborate furnishings, including her satin array:

"However it may have seemed, I don't care a bawbee about these things! I never did; and it always annoyed father as it annoyed you. I am sorry, if you like. But at last we understand each other. We can live, fight, intelligently."

Gisela knew; regret, pretense, were useless now, and curiously in that knowledge she seemed to come closer to him; he had a new sense of her actuality. Yet that evening she not only refused to listen to any serious statements, but played and sang the most frothy Italian songs.

XVI

On the day following he felt generally upheld. His old sense of power, of domination, his contempt for petty men and competitions, returned. He determined to go to Pittsburgh himself and study the labor conditions; perhaps secure a fresh, advantageous connection. He was planning the details of this when a man he knew only slightly, by sight, as connected with the coaling, swung unceremoniously into his office.

"Mr. Hulings, sir," he stammered, "Wishon has been shot — killed."

"Impossible!" he ejaculated.

But instantly Alexander Hulings was convinced that it was true. His momentary confidence, vigor, receded before the piling adversities, bent apparently upon his destruction.

"Yes, his body is coming up now. All we know is, a watchman saw him standing at a window of the Wooddrop Mills after hours, and shot him for trespassing — spying on their process."

Alexander's first thought was not of the man just killed, but of old Conrad, longer dead. He had been a faithful, an invaluable, assistant; without him Hulings would never have risen. And now he had been the cause of his son's death! A sharp regret seized him, but he grew rapidly calm before the excitement of the inferior before him.

"Keep this quiet for the moment," he commanded.

"Quiet!" the other cried. "It's already known all over the mountains. Wishon's workmen have quit coaling. They swear they will get Wooddrop's superintendent and hang him."

"Where are they?" Hulings demanded.

The other became sullen, uncommunicative. "We want to pay them for this," he muttered. "No better man lived than Wishon."

Alexander at once told his wife of the accident. She was still surprisingly contained, though pale. "Our men must be controlled," she asserted. "No further horrors!"

Her attitude, he thought, was exactly right; it was neither callous nor hysterical. He was willing to assume the burden of his responsibilities. It was an ugly, a regrettable, occurrence; but men had been killed in his employ before — not a week passed without an accident, and if he lost his head in a welter of sentimentality he might as well shut down at once. Some men lived, struggled upward. It was a primary part of the business of success to keep alive.

Gisela had correctly found the real danger of their position — the thing must go no further. The sky had clouded and a cold rain commenced to fall. He could, however, pay no attention to the weather; he rose from a partial dinner and departed on a score of complicated and difficult errands. But his main concern, to locate and dominate the mobbing charcoal burners, evaded his straining efforts. He caught rumors, echoed threats; once he almost overtook them; yet, with scouts placed, they avoided him.

He sent an urgent message to John Wooddrop, and, uncertain of its delivery, himself drove in search of the other; but Wooddrop was out somewhere in his wide holdings; the superintendent could not be located. A sense of an implacable fatality hung over him; every chance turned against him, mocked the insecurity of his boasted position, deepened the abyss waiting for his suspended fall.

He returned finally, baffled and weary, to his house; yet still tense with the spirit of angry combat. A species of fatalism now enveloped him in the conviction that he had reached the zenith of his misfortunes; if he could survive the present day. . . . A stableman met him at the veranda.

"Mrs. Hulings has gone," the servant told him. "A man came looking for you. It seems they had Wooddrop's manager back in the Mills tract and were going to string him up. But you couldn't be found. Mrs. Hulings, she went to stop it."

An inky cloud floated nauseously before his eyes — not himself alone, but Gisela, dragged into the dark whirlpool gathered about his destiny! He was momentarily stunned, with twitching hands and a riven, haggard face, remembering the sodden brutality of the men he had seen in the smoke of charring, isolated stacks; and then a sharp energy seized him.

"How long back?" Hulings demanded.

"An hour or more, perhaps a couple."

Alexander raged at the mischance that had sent Gisela on such an errand. Nothing, he felt, with Wooddrop's manager secured, would halt the charcoal burners' revenge of Wishon's death. The rain now beat down in a heavy diagonal pour, and twilight was gathering.

"We must go at once for Mrs. Hulings," he said. Then he saw Gisela approaching, accompanied by a small knot of men. She walked directly to him, her crinoline soggy with rain, her hair plastered on her brow; her deathly pallor drove everything else from his observation. She shuddered slowly, her skirt dripping ceaselessly about her on the sod.

"I was too late!" she said in a dull voice. "They had done it!" She covered her eyes, moved back from the men beside her, from him. "Swinging a little . . . all alone! So sudden — there, before me!" A violent shivering seized her.

"Come," Alexander Hulings said hoarsely; "you must get out of the wet. Warm things. Immediately!"

He called imperatively for Gisela's maid, and together they assisted her up to her room. Above, Gisela had a long, violent chill; and he sent a wagon for the doctor at Harmony.

The doctor arrived, and mounted the stairs; but, half an hour later, he would say little. Alexander Hulings commanded him to remain in the house. The lines deepened momentarily on the former's countenance; he saw himself unexpectedly in a shadowy pier glass, and stood for a long while subconsciously surveying the lean, grizzled countenance that followed his gaze out of the immaterial depths. "Alexander Hulings," he said aloud, in a tormented mockery; "the master of — of life!"

He was busy with the local marshal when the doctor summoned him from the office.

"Your wife," the other curtly informed him, "has developed pneumonia."

Hulings steadied himself with a hand against a wall.

"Pneumonia!" he repeated, to no one in particular. "Send again for John Wooddrop."

He was seated, a narrow, rigid figure, waiting for the older man, in the midst of gorgeous upholstery. Two facts hammered with equal persistence on his numbed brain: one that all his projects, his dream of power, of iron, now approached ruin, and the other that Gisela had pneumonia. It was a dreadful thing that she had come on in the Mills tract! The Columbus System must triumphantly absorb all that he had, that he was to be. Gisela had been chilled to the bone; pneumonia! It became difficult and then impossible to distinguish one from the other — Gisela and the iron were inexplicably welded in the poised catastrophe of his ambition.

Alexander Hulings rose, his thin lips pinched, his eyes mere sparks, his body tense, as if he were confronting the embodied force that had checked him. He stood upright, so still that he might have been cast in the metal that had formed his vision of power, holding an unquailing mien. His indistinguishable pride cloaked him in a final contempt for all that life, that fate, might do. Then his rigidity was assaulted by John Wooddrop's heavy and hurried entrance into the room.

Hulings briefly repeated the doctor's pronouncement. Wooddrop's face s darkly pouched, his unremoved hat a mere wet film, and he left muddy ct footprints wherever he stepped on the velvet carpet.

By heaven! " he quavered, his arms upraised. " If between us we have 'ed her —— " His voice abruptly expired.

As Alexander Hulings watched him the old man's countenance grew livid, his jaw dropped; he was at the point of falling. He gasped, his hands beating the air; then the unnatural color receded, words became distinguishable: " Gisela! . . . Never be forgiven! Hellish! " It was as if Death had touched John Wooddrop on the shoulder, dragging a scarifying hand across his face, and then briefly, capriciously, withdrawn.

" Hulings! Hulings," he articulated, sinking weakly on a chair, " we must save her. And, anyhow, God knows we were blind! " He peered out of suffused rheumy eyes at Alexander, appalling in his sudden disintegration under shock and the weight of his years. " I'm done! " he said tremulously. " And there's a good bit to see to — patent lawyer tomorrow, and English shipments. Swore I'd keep you from it." He held out a hand, " But there's Gisela, brought down between us now, and — and iron's colder than a daughter, a wife. We'd best cover up the past quick as we can! "

At the instant of grasping John Wooddrop's hand Alexander Hulings' inchoate emotion shifted to a vast realization, blotting out all else from his mind. In the control of the immense Wooddrop resources he was beyond, bove, all competition, all danger. What he had fought for, persistently reamed, had at last come about — he was the greatest Ironmaster of the state!